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## The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### ON THE ROAD TO ITALY.



YOU'D not guess who our neighbours of last night were, Julia," said L'Estrange as they sat at breakfast the next morning.

"I need not guess, for I know," said she, laughing. "The fact is, George, my curiosity was so excited to see them that I got up as they were about to start, and though the grey morning was only breaking at the time, there was light enough for me to recognize Mr. Longworth and his French friend, Count Pracontal."

"I know that; but I know more than that, Julia. What do you think of my discovery, when I tell you that this same Count Pracontal is the claimant of the Bramleigh estate?"

"Is it possible?"

"It is beyond a question or a doubt. I was awakened from my sleep last night by their loud talking, and unwittingly made a listener to all they said. I heard the Frenchman deplore how he had ever consented to a compromise of his claim, and then Longworth quizzed him a good deal, and attributed the regret to his not having made a harder

bargain. My own conviction is that the man really felt it as a point of honour, and was ashamed at having stooped to accept less than his right."

"So then they have made a compromise, and the Bramleighs are safe?" cried she eagerly.

"That much seems certain. The Count even spoke of the sum he had received. I did not pay much attention to the amount, but I remember it struck me as being considerable; and he also referred to his having signed some document debarring him, as it seemed, from all renewal of his demand. In a word, as you said just now, the Bramleighs are safe, and the storm that threatened their fate has passed off harmlessly."

"Oh, you have made me so happy, George. I cannot tell you what joy this news is to me. Poor Nelly in all her sorrow and privation has never been out of my thoughts since I read her letter."

"I have not told you the strangest part of all—at least so it certainly seemed to me. This Count Pracontal actually regretted the compromise, as depriving him of a noble opportunity of self-sacrifice. He wished, he said, he could have gone to Augustus Bramleigh, and declared, 'I want none of this wealth. These luxuries and this station are all essential to you, who have been born to them, and regard them as part of your very existence. To me they are no wants—I never knew them. Keep them, therefore, as your own. All I ask is, that you regard me as one of your kindred and your family. Call me cousin—let me be one of you—to come here, under your roof, when fortune goes ill with me.' When he was saying this, Longworth burst out into a coarse laugh, and told him, that if he talked such rotten sentimentality to any sane Englishman, the only impression it would have left would be that he was a consummate knave or an idiot."

"Well, George," asked she, seriously, "that was not the conviction it conveyed to your mind?"

"No, Julia, certainly not; but somehow—perhaps it is my colder northern blood, perhaps it is the cautious reserve of one who has not had enough experience of life—but I own to you I distrust very high-flown declarations, and as a rule I like the men who do generous things, and don't think themselves heroes for doing them."

"Remember, George, it was a Frenchman who spoke thus; and from what I have seen of his nation, I would say that he meant all that he said. These people do the very finest things out of an exalted self-esteem. They carry the point of honour so high that there is no sacrifice they are not capable of making, if it only serve to elevate their opinion of themselves. Their theory is, they belong to the 'great nation,' and the motives that would do well enough for you or me, would be very ignoble springs of action to him whom Providence had blessed with the higher destiny of being born a Frenchman."

"You disparage while you praise them, Julia,"

"I do not mean it then. I would simply say, I believe in all Count Pracontal said, and I give you my reason for the belief."

"How happy it would have made poor Augustus to have been met in this spirit. Why don't these two men know each other?"

"My dear George, the story of life could no more go on than the story of a novel if there was no imbroglio. Take away from the daily course of events all misunderstandings, all sorrows, and all misconceptions, and there would be no call on humanity for acts of energy, or trustfulness, or devotion. We want all these things just that we may surmount them."

Whether he did not fully concur with the theory, or that it puzzled him, L'Estrange made no reply, and soon after left the room to prepare for their departure. And now they went the road up the valley of the Upper Rhine,—that wild and beautiful tract, so grand in outline and so rich in colour, that other landscapes seem cold after it. They wound along the Via Mala, and crossed over the Splügen, most picturesque of Alpine passes, and at last reached Chiavenna.

"All this is very enjoyable, George," said Julia, as they strolled carelessly in a trellised vine-walk; "but as I am the courier, and carry the money-sack, it is my painful duty to say, we can't do it much longer. Do you know how much remains in that little bag?"

"A couple of hundred francs perhaps," said he, listlessly.

"Not half that—how could there, you careless creature? You forget all the extravagances we have been committing, and this entire week of unheard-of indulgence."

"I was always 'had up' for my arithmetic at school. Old Hoskins used to say my figures would be the ruin of me."

The tone of honest sorrow in which he said this threw Julia into a fit of laughing.

"Here is the total of our worldly wealth," said she, emptying on a rustic table the leather bag, and running her fingers through a mass of silver in which a few gold coins glittered.

"It seems very little, Julia," said he, despondingly.

"Worse than that. It is less than it looks, George; these tarnished pieces, with a mock air of silver, are of most ignoble origin; they were born copper, and are only silver by courtesy. Let me see what it all makes."

While she was arranging the money in little piles on the table L'Estrange lighted a cigarette, and puffed it in leisurely fashion.

"Julia," said he at last, "I hope I haven't committed a dreadful folly in that investment of your two thousand. You know I took the shares I told you of?"

"I remember, George, you said so; but has anything occurred to make you augur ill of the enterprise?"

"No; I know no more of it now than on the first day I heard of it. I was dazzled by the splendid promise of twenty per cent. instead of three that you had received heretofore. It seemed to me to be such a paltry fear

to hesitate about doing what scores of others were venturing. I felt as if I were turning away from a big fence while half the field were ready to ride at it. In fact, I made it a question of courage, Julia, which was all the more inexcusable as the money I was risking was not my own."

"Oh, George, you must not say that to me."

"Well, well, I know what I think of myself, and I promise you it is not the more favourable because of your generosity."

"My dear George, that is a word that ought never to occur between us. Our interests are inseparable. When you have done what you believed was the best for me there is no question of anything more. There now, don't worry yourself further about it. Attend to what I have to say to you here. We have just one hundred and twelve francs to carry us to Milan, where our letter of credit will meet us; so that there must be no more boat-excursions; no little picnics, with a dainty basket sent up the mountain at sunrise; none of that charming liberality which lights up the road with pleasant faces, and sets one a-thinking how happy Dives might have been if he had given something better than crumbs to Lazarus. No, this must be what you used to call a week of cold-mutton days, mind that, and resist all temptation to money-spending."

L'Estrange bowed his head in quiet acquiescence; his was the sad thought that so many of us have felt; how much of enjoyment life shows us, just one hair's-breadth beyond our power to grasp, vistas of lovely scenery that we are never to visit: glimpses of bliss closed to us even as we catch them. Strains of delicious music of which all our efforts can but retain the dying cadences. Not that he felt all these in any bitterness of spirit; even in narrowed fortune life was very pleasant to him, and he was thoroughly, heartily grateful for the path fate had assigned him to walk in.

How would they have liked to have lingered in the Brianza, that one lovely bit of thoroughly rural Italy, with the green of the west blending through all the gorgeous glow of a tropical vegetation; how gladly they would have loitered on the Lake at Como—the brightest spot of landscape in Europe; with what enjoyment had they halted at Milan, and still more in Florence! Stern necessity, however, whispered ever onwards; and all the seductions of Raffaels and Titians yielded before the hard demands of that fate that draws the purse-strings. Even at Rome they did not venture to delay, consoling themselves with the thought that they were to dwell so near, they could visit it at will. At last they reached Albano, and as they drove into the village caught sight of a most picturesque little cottage, enshrined in a copse of vines. It was apparently untenanted, and they eagerly asked if it were to be let. The answer was, No, it was waiting for the "Prete Inglese" who was daily expected to arrive.

"Oh, George, it is ours," cried Julia in ecstasy, and hid her head on his shoulder, and actually cried with excess of delight.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## THE CHURCH PATRONS AT ALBANO.

THE patrons of the English chapel at Albano were the three great leaders of society in Rome in winter and at Albano during the summer. Of these the first was Lady Augusta Bramleigh; next came Sir Marcus Cluff; and last—not, indeed, either in activity or zeal—was Mrs. Trumpler, a widow-lady of considerable fortune, and no small share of energy in her nature.

To these George L'Estrange had brought formal letters of introduction, which he was cautiously enjoined should be presented in the order of their respective ranks,—making his first approaches to the Lady Augusta. To his request to know at what hour he might have the honour to wait on her ladyship, came a few lines on the back of his own card, saying,—“Two o'clock, and be punctual.” There did not seem to be any unnecessary courtesy in this curt intimation; but he dressed himself carefully for the interview, and with his cravat properly arranged by Julia, who passed his whole appearance in review, he set out for the pretty Villa of the Chestnuts where her ladyship lived.

“I don't suppose that I'm about to do anything very unworthy, Julia,” said he, as he bade her good-by; “but I assure you I feel lower in my own esteem this morning than I have known myself since—since——”

“Since you tumbled over the sunk fence, perhaps,” said she, laughing, and turned back into the house.

L'Estrange soon found himself at the gate of the villa, and was conducted by a servant in deep mourning through a very beautiful garden to a small kiosk, or summer-house, where a breakfast-table was spread. He was punctual to the moment; but as her ladyship had not yet appeared he had ample time to admire the beauty of the Sèvres cups of a pale blue, and the rich carving of the silver service,—evidently of antique mould, and by a master hand. The rare exotics which were disposed on every side, amongst which some birds of bright plumage were encaged, seemed to fill up the measure of this luxurious spot, and impressed him with—he knew not what exalted idea of her who should be its mistress.

He waited, at first patiently enough—there was much to interest and amuse him; but at last, as nigh an hour had elapsed, and she had not appeared, a feeling, half of irritation at the thought of neglect, and half doubt lest he should have mistaken what the servant said, began to worry and distress him. A little pendule on a bracket played a few bars of a waltz, and struck three. Should he wait any longer? was the question he put himself. His sense of shame on leaving home at the thought of presenting himself before a patron came back upon him now with redoubled force. He had often felt that the ministers who preached for a call were submitting themselves to a very unworthy ordeal. The being judged by those they were appointed to teach seemed in itself little short of an outrage; but the part he was now playing was infinitely worse;—he had

actually come to show himself, to see if, when looked at and talked to, her ladyship would condescend to be his patron, and as it were to impress the indignity more strongly upon him he was kept waiting like a lacquey!

"I don't think I ought to stoop to this," muttered he bitterly to himself; and taking a card and a pencil from his pocket, he wrote:—"The Rev. George L'Estrange has waited from two to three o'clock in the hope of seeing Lady Augusta Bramleigh; he regrets the disappointment, as well as his inability to prolong his attendance." "There," cried he aloud, "I hope that will do!" and he placed the card conspicuously on the table.

"Do what, pray?" said a very soft voice, as a slight figure in deep mourning swept noiselessly into the kiosk, and taking the card up, sat down without reading it.

One glance showed that the handsome woman before him was Lady Augusta, and the bashful curate blushed deeply at the awkwardness of his position.

"Mr. L'Estrange, I presume?" said she, waving her hand to him to be seated. "And what is your card to do; not represent you, I hope, for I'd rather see you in person?"

"In my despair of seeing your ladyship I wrote a line to say—to say"—and he blundered and stopped short.

"To say you'd wait no longer," said she smiling; "but how touchy you must be. Don't you know that women have the privilege of unpunctuality? don't you know it is one of the few prerogatives you men have spared them? Have you breakfasted?"

"Yes—some hours ago."

"I forget whether I have not also. I rather think I did take some coffee. I have been very impatient for your coming. Sit here, please," said she, pointing to an arm-chair beside her own sofa. "I have been very impatient indeed to see you. I want to hear all about these poor Bramleighs;—you lived beside them, didn't you, and knew them all intimately? What is this terrible story of their ruin? this claim to their property? What does it mean? is there really anything in it?"

"It is somewhat of a long story," began L'Estrange.

"Then don't tell it, I entreat you. Are you married, Mr. L'Estrange?"

"No, madam, I have not that happiness," said he, smiling at the strange abruptness of her manner.

"Oh, I am so glad," she cried; "so glad! I'm not afraid of a parson, but I positively dread a parson's wife. The parson has occasionally a little tolerance for a number of things he doesn't exactly like; his wife never forgives them; and then a woman takes such exact measure of another woman's meanings, and a man knows nothing about them at all; that on the whole I'm delighted you are single, and I fervently trust you will remain so. Will you promise me as much? will you give me your word not to marry till I leave this?"

"I need scarcely pledge myself, madam, to that; my narrow fortune binds me whether I would or not."

"And you have your mother with you, haven't you?"

"No, madam; my sister has accompanied me."

"I wish it had been your mother. I do so like the maternal pride of a dear old lady in her fine handsome son. Isn't she vain of you? By the way, how did your choice fall upon the Church? You look more like a cavalry officer. I'm certain you ride well."

"It is, perhaps, the only accomplishment I possess in the world," said he, with some warmth of manner.

"I'm delighted to hear that you're a horseman. There's a mare of mine become perfectly impossible. A stupid creature I took as groom hurt her mouth with a severe bit, and she rears now at the slightest touch. Couldn't you do something with her? Pray do; and in return I'll take you some charming rides over the Campagna. There's a little valley—almost a glen—near this, which I may say I discovered myself. You mustn't be afraid of bad tongues because you ride out with me. Mrs. Trumpler will of course take it up. She's odious—perfectly odious. You haven't seen her yet, but you'll have to call on her; she contributes a thousand francs a year to the Church, and must not be neglected. And then there's old Sir Marcus Cluff—don't forget him; and take care to remember that his mother was Lady Marion Otley, and don't remember that his father was Cluff and Gosler, the famous fishmonger. I protest I'm becoming as scandalous as Mrs. Trumpler herself. And mind that you come back and tell when you've seen these people what they said to you, and what you said to them, and whether they abused me. Come to tea, or, if you like better, come and dine to-morrow at six, and I'll call on your mother in the meanwhile and ask her—though I'd rather you'd come alone."

"It is my sister, madam, that is with me," said he, with great difficulty refraining from a burst of laughter.

"Well, and I've said I'd visit her, though I'm not fond of women, and I believe they never like me."

L'Estrange blundered out some stupid compliment about her having in recompence abundant admiration from the other sex, and she laughed, and said, "Perhaps so. Indeed, I believe I am rather a favourite; but with clever men—not with the fools. You'll see that *they* avoid me. And so," said she, drawing a deep sigh, "you really can tell me nothing about these Bramleighs? And all this time I have been reckoning on your coming to hear everything, and to know about the will. Up to this hour, I am totally ignorant as to how I am left. Isn't that very dreadful?"

"It is very distressing indeed, madam."

"The Colonel always said he'd insert a clause or a something or other against my marrying again. Can you imagine anything so ungenerous? It's unchristian, actually unchristian—isn't it?"

A slight gesture seemed to say that he agreed with her; but she was for once determined to be answered more definitely, and she said, "I'm

sure, as a clergyman, you can say if there's anything in the Bible against my having another husband?"

"I'm certain there is not, madam."

"How nice it is in the Church of Rome that when there's anything you want to do, and it's not quite right to do it, you can have a dispensation—that is, the Pope can make it perfectly moral and proper, and legal besides. Protestantism is so narrow—terribly narrow. As the dear Monsignore Balbi said to me the other night, it is a long 'Act of Parliament against sin.' Wasn't that neat? They are so clever!"

"I am so new to Italy, madam, that I have no acquaintance with these gentlemen."

"I know you'll like them when you do know them; they are so gentle and so persuasive—I might say so fascinating. I assure you, Mr. L'Estrange, I ran a very great risk of going over, as it is called. Indeed, the *Osservatore Romano* said I had gone over; but that was at least premature. These are things one cannot do without long and deep reflection, and intense self-examination—don't you think so? And the dear old Cardinal Bottesini, who used to come to us every Friday evening, warned me himself against my impulsiveness; and then poor Colonel Bramleigh,"—here she raised her handkerchief to her eyes,—“he wouldn't hear of it at all; he was so devotedly attached to me—it was positive love in a man of his mould—that the thought of my being lost to him, as he called it, was maddening; and in fact he—he made it downright impossible!” And at last she paused, and a very painful expression in her face showed that her thoughts at the moment were far from pleasurable. “Where was I? what was it I was going to say?” resumed she, hurriedly. “Oh, I remember, I was going to tell you that you must on no account ‘go over,’ and therefore, avoid of all things what they call the ‘controversy’ here; don't read their little books, and never make close friendships with the Monsignori. You're a young man, and naturally enough would feel flattered at their attentions, and all the social attractions they'd surround you with. Of course you know nothing of life, and that is the very thing they do understand; and perhaps it's not right of me to say it—it's like a treason—but the women, the great leaders of society, aid them powerfully. They'd like to bring you over,” said she, raising her glass and looking at him. “You'd really look remarkably well in a chasuble and a cope. They'd positively fight for you as a domestic chaplain”—and the thought so amused her that she laughed outright, and L'Estrange himself joined her. “I hope I have not wearied you with my cautions and my warnings; but really, when I thought how utterly alone and friendless you must be here, nobody to consult with, none to advise you—for, after all, your mother could scarcely be an efficient guide in such difficulties—I felt it would be cruel not to come to your aid. Have you got a watch? I don't trust that little pendule, though it plays a delicious ‘Ave Maria’ of Rossini's. What hour is it?”

"Half-past four, madam. I am really shocked at the length of my visit."

"Well, I must go away. Perhaps you'll come and see my sister—she's charming, I assure you, and she'd like to know you?"

"If you will vouchsafe to present me on any other day, I shall be but too grateful; but Sir Marcus Cluff gave me a rendezvous for four o'clock."

"And you'll be with him at five," cried she, laughing. "Don't say it was I that made you break your appointment, for he hates me, and would never forgive you. By-by. Tell your mother I'll call on her to-morrow, and hope you'll both dine with me." And without waiting for a word in reply, she tripped out of the summer-house and hastened away to the villa.

L'Estrange had little time to think over this somewhat strange interview when he reached the entrance-gate to the grounds of Sir Marcus Cluff, and was scarcely admitted within the precincts when a phaeton and a pair of very diminutive ponies drove up, and a thin, emaciated man, carefully swathed in shawls and wrappers, who held the reins, called out, "Is that Mr. L'Estrange?"

The young parson came forward with his excuses for being late, and begged that he might not interrupt Sir Marcus in his intended drive.

"Will you take a turn with me?" said Sir Marcus, in a whining voice, that sounded like habitual complaint. "I'm obliged to do this every day; it's the doctor's order. He says, 'Take the air and distract yourself;' and I do so." L'Estrange had now seated himself, and they drove away.

"I'm glad you've come," said Sir Marcus. "It will stop all this plotting and intriguing. If you had delayed much longer, I think they'd have had a dozen here—one of them a converted Jew, a very dirty fellow. O dear, how fatiguing it is! that little crop-eared pony pulls so he can't be held, and we call him John Bright; but don't mention it. I hope you have no family, sir?"

"I have my sister only."

"A sister isn't so bad. A sister may marry, or she may——" What was the other alternative did not appear, for John Bright bolted at this moment, and it was full five minutes ere he could be pulled up again. "This is the distraction I'm promised," said the sick man. If it wasn't for Mr. Needham—I call the near-sider Mr. Needham, as I bought him of that gentleman—I'd have too much distraction; but Needham never runs away—he falls; he comes down as if he was shot!" cried he, with a joyous twinkle of the eye, "and I bought him for that. There's no drag ever was invented like a horse on his belly—the most inveterate runaway can't escape against that." If the little cackle that followed this speech did not sound exactly like a laugh, it was all of that emotion that Sir Marcus ever permitted himself.

"I can't ask you if you like this place. You're too newly come to answer that question," resumed he; "but I may ask what is the sort of society you prefer?"

"I've seen next to nothing of the world since I left the University.

I have been living these last four or five years in one of the least visited spots in Great Britain, and only since the arrival of the Bramleigh family had a neighbour to speak to."

"Ah, then, you know these Bramleighs?" said the other with more animation than he had yet displayed. "Overbearing people, I've heard they were—very rich, and insolent to a degree."

"I must say I have found them everything that was kind and considerate, hospitable neighbours, and very warm-hearted friends."

"That's not the world's judgment on them, my dear sir—far from it. They are a proverb for pretension and impertinence. As for Lady Augusta here—to be sure she's only one of them by marriage—but there's not a soul in the place she has not outraged. She goes nowhere—of course, *that* she has a right to do—but she never returns a call, never even sends a card. She went so far as to tell Mr. Pemberton, your predecessor here, that she liked Albano for its savagery; that there was no one to know, was its chief charm for her."

"I saw her for the first time this morning," said L'Estrange, not liking to involve himself in this censure.

"And she fascinated you, of course? I'm told she does that with every good-looking young fellow that comes in her way. She's a finished coquette, they say. I don't know what that means, nor do I believe it would have much success with me if I did know. All the coquetry she bestows upon me is to set my ponies off in full gallop whenever she overtakes me driving. She starts away in a sharp canter just behind me, and John Bright fancies it a race, and away he goes too, and if Mr. Needham was of the same mettle I don't know what would become of us. I'm afraid, besides, she's a connection of mine. My mother, Lady Marion, was cousin to one of the Delahunts of Kings Cromer. Would you mind taking the reins for awhile, John is fearfully rash to-day? Just sit where you are, the near-side gives you the whip-hand for Needham. Ah, that's a relief! Turn down the next road on your left. And so she never asked you about your tenets—never inquired whether you were High Church or Low Church or no church at all?"

"Pardon me, Sir Marcus; she was particularly anxious that I should guard myself against Romish fascinations and advances."

"Ah, she knows them all! They thought they had secured her—indeed they were full sure of it; but as she said to poor Mr. Pemberton, they found they had hatched a duck. She was only flirting with Rome. The woman would flirt with the Holy Father, sir, if she had a chance. There's nothing serious, nothing real, nothing honest about her; but she charmed *you*, for all that—I see it. I see it all; and you're to take moonlight rides with her over the Campagna. Ha-ha-ha! Haven't I hit it? Poor old Pemberton—fifty-eight if he was an hour—got a bad bronchitis with these same night excursions. Worse than that, he made the place too hot for him. Mrs. Trumpler—an active woman Mrs. T., and the eye of a hawk—wouldn't stand the 'few sweet moments,' as poor Pemberton

in his simplicity called them. She threatened him with a general meeting, and a vote of censure, and a letter to the Bishop of Gibraltar; and she frightened him so that he resigned. I was away at the time at the baths at Ischia, or I'd have tried to patch up matters. Indeed, as I told Mrs. T., I'd have tried to get rid of my Lady, instead of banishing poor Pemberton, as kind-hearted a creature as ever I met, and a capital whist-player. Not one of your new-fangled fellows, with the 'call for trumps' and all the last devices of the Portland, but a steady player, who never varied—didn't go chopping about, changing his suits, and making false leads, but went manfully through his hearts before he opened his spades. We were at Christ Church together. I knew him for a matter of six-and-thirty years, Mr. L'Estrange, and I pledge you my word of honour"—here his voice grew tremulous with agitation—"and in all that time I never knew him revoke!" He drew his hat over his eyes as he spoke, and leaning back in the seat seemed almost overcome by his emotions.

"Will you turn in there at that small gate? It is a private entrance to my grounds. I'll not ask you to come in to-day, sir. I'm a little flurried and nervous; but if you'll join a sick man's dinner at two o'clock to-morrow—some rice and a chicken and a bit of fish—nothing more, I promise you. Well, well, I see it does not tempt you. My best thanks for your pleasant company. Let me see you soon. Take care of yourself, beware of my Lady, and avoid the moonlight!"

Apparently this little sally seemed to revive the invalid, for he stepped up the approach to his house with a lively air and waved his hand pleasantly as he said adieu.

"There's another still!" muttered L'Estrange as he inquired the way to Mrs. Trumpler's; "and I wish with all my heart it was all over."

L'Estrange found Mrs. Trumpler at tea. She was an early diner, and took tea about six o'clock, after which she went out for an evening drive over the Campagna. In aspect, the lady was not prepossessing. She was very red-faced, with large grizzly curls arranged in a straight line across her forehead, and she wore spectacles of such a size as to give her somewhat the look of an owl. In figure, she was portly and stout, and had a stand-up sort of air, that to a timid or bashful man, like the curate, was the reverse of reassuring.

"I perceive, sir, I am the last on your list," said she, looking at her watch as he entered. "It is past six."

"I regret, madam, if I have come at an inconvenient hour. Will you allow me to wait on you to-morrow?"

"No, sir. We will, with your permission, avail ourselves of the present to make acquaintance with each other." She rang the bell after this speech, and ordered that the carriage should be sent away. "I shall not drive, Giacomo," said she; "and I do not receive if any one calls."

"You brought me a letter, sir, from the Reverend Silas Smallwood," said she, very much in the tone of a barrister cross-examining a troublesome witness.

"Yes, madam; that gentleman kindly offered a friend of mine to be the means of presenting me to you."

"So that you are not personally acquainted, sir?"

"We have never, so far as I know, even seen each other."

"It is as well, sir, fully as well. Mr. Smallwood is a person for whose judgment or discrimination I would have the very humblest opinion, and I have, therefore, from what you tell me, the hope that you are not of his party in the Church?"

"I am unable to answer you, madam, knowing nothing whatever of Mr. Smallwood's peculiar views."

"This is fencing, sir; and I don't admire fencing. Let us understand each other. What have you come here to preach? I hope my question is a direct one?"

"I am an ordained minister of the Church of England, madam; and when I have said so, I have answered you."

"What, sir? do you imagine your reply is sufficient in an age when not alone every doctrine is embraced within the Church, but that there is a very large and increasing party who are prepared to have no doctrine at all? I perceive, sir, I must make my approaches to you in a different fashion. Are you a man of vestments, gesticulations, and glass windows? Do you dramatize your Christianity?"

"I believe I can say no, madam, to all these."

"Are you a Literalist, then? What about Noah, sir? Let me hear what you have to say about the Flood. Have you ever calculated what forty days' rainfall would amount to? Do you know that in Assam, where the rains are the heaviest in that part of the world, and in Colon, in South America, no twelve hours' rain ever passed five inches and three-quarters? You are, I am sure, acquainted with Eschschormes' book on the Nile deposits? If not, sir, it is yonder—at your service. Now, sir, we shall devote this evening to the Deluge, and, so far as time permits, the age of the earth. To-morrow evening we'll take Moses, on Staub's suggestion that many persons were included under that name. We'll keep the Pentateuch for Friday, for I expect the Rabbi Bensì will be here by that time."

"Will you pardon me, madam," said L'Estrange, rising, "if I decline entering upon all discussion of these momentous questions with you? I have no such scholarship as would enable me to prove instructive, and I have conviction sufficiently strong, in my faith in other men's learning, to enable me to reject quibbles and be unmoved by subtleties. Besides," added he, in a sharper tone, "I have come here to have the honour of making your acquaintance, and not to submit myself to an examination. May I wish you a good-evening?"

How he took his leave, how he descended the stairs, and rushed into the street, and found his way to the little inn where his sister wearily was waiting dinner for him, the poor curate never knew to the last day of his life.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## A SMALL LODGING AT LOUVAINE.

IN a very humble quarter of the old town of Louvaine, at the corner of La Rue des Moines, Augustus Bramleigh and his sister had taken up their lodgings. Madame Jervasse, the proprietress of the house, had in her youth been the femme-de-chambre of some high-born dame of Brussels, and offered her services in the same capacity to Ellen, while with the aid of her own servant she prepared their meals, thus at once supplying the modest requirements they needed. Augustus Bramleigh was not a very resolute or determined man, but his was one of those natures that acquire solidity from pressure. When once he found himself on the road of sacrifices, his self-esteem imparted vigour and energy to his character. In the ordinary course of events he was accustomed to hold himself—his abilities and his temperament—cheaply enough. No man was ever less self-opinionated or self-confident. If referred to for advice, or even for opinion, he would modestly decline the last, and say, "Marion or Temple perhaps could help you here." He shrank from all self-assertion whatever, and it was ever a most painful moment to him when he was presented to any one as the future head of the house and the heir to the Bramleigh estates. To Ellen, from whom he had no secrets, he had often confessed how he wished he had been a younger son. All his tastes and all his likings were those to be enjoyed by a man of moderate fortune, and an ambition even smaller than that fortune. He would say, too, half-jestingly, "With such aspiring spirits amongst us as Marion and Temple, I can afford myself the luxury of obscurity. *They* are sure to carry our banner loftily, and *I* may with safety go on my humble path unnoticed."

Jack had always been his favourite brother: his joyous nature, his sailor-like frankness, his spirit, and his willingness to oblige, contrasted very favourably with Temple's sedate, cautious manner, and the traces of a selfishness that never forgot itself. Had Jack been the second son instead of the youngest, Augustus would have abdicated in his favour at once, but he could not make such a sacrifice for Temple. All the less that the very astute diplomatist continually harped on the sort of qualities which were required to dispense an ample fortune, and more than insinuated how much such a position would become himself, while another might only regard it as a burden and a worry. It was certainly a great shock to him to learn that there was a claimant to his family fortune and estate: the terrible feeling that they were to appear before the world as impostors,—holding a station and dispensing a wealth to which they had no right,—almost overcame him. The disgrace of a public exposure, the notoriety it would evoke, were about the most poignant sufferings such a man could be brought to endure. He to whom a newspaper comment, a mere passing notice of his name, was a source of pain and annoyance; that he should

figure in a great trial and his downfall be made the theme of moral reflections in a leading article! How was this to be borne? What could break the fall from a position of affluence and power to a condition of penury and insignificance? Nothing—if not the spirit which by meeting disaster half-way, seemed at least to accept the inevitable with courage, and so carry a high heart in the last moments of defeat.

Augustus well knew what a mistaken estimate the world had ever formed of his timid, bashful nature, and this had given his manner a semblance of pride and hauteur which made the keynote of his character. It was all in vain that he tried to persuade people that he had not an immeasurable self-conceit. They saw it in his every word and gesture, in his coolness when they approached him, in his almost ungraciousness when they were courteous to him. "Many will doubtless declare," said he, "that this reverse of fortune is but a natural justice on one who plumed himself too much on his prosperity, and who arrogated too far on the accident of his wealth. If so I can but say they will not judge me fairly. They will know nothing of where my real suffering lies. It is less the loss of fortune I deplore, than the world's judgment on having so long usurped that we had no right to."

From the day he read Sedley's letter and held that conversation with the lawyer, in which he heard that the claimant's case seemed a very strong one, and that perhaps the Bramleighs had nothing to oppose to it of so much weight as the great fact of possession—from that hour he took a despairing view of the case. There are men who at the first reverse of fortune throw down their cards and confess themselves beaten. There are men who can accept defeat itself better than meet the vacillating events of a changeful destiny; who have no persistence in their courage, nor any resources to meet the coming incidents of life. Augustus Bramleigh possessed a great share of this temperament. It is true that Sedley after much persuasion induced him to entertain the idea of a compromise, carefully avoiding the use of that unhappy word, and substituting for it the less obnoxious expression "arrangement." Now this same arrangement, as Mr. Sedley put it, was a matter which concerned the Bramleighs collectively:—seeing that if the family estates were to be taken away, nothing would remain to furnish the provision for younger children. "You must ascertain what your brothers will do," wrote Sedley; "you must inquire how far Lord Culduff—who through his marriage has a rent-charge on the estate—will be willing to contribute to an 'arrangement.'"

Nothing could be less encouraging than the answer this appeal called forth. Lord Culduff wrote back in the tone of an injured man, all but declaring that he had been regularly taken in; indeed, he did not scruple to aver that it had never been his intention to embark in a ship that was sure to founder, and he threw out something like a rebuke on the indelicacy of asking him to add to the sacrifice he had already made for the honour of being allied to them.

Temple's note ran thus:—

"DEAR GUSTY,—If your annoyances have not affected your brain, I am at a loss for an explanation of your last letter. How, I would ask you, is a poor secretary of legation to subsist on the beggarly pittance F. O. affords him? Four hundred and fifty per annum is to supply rent, clothes, club expenses, a stall at the opera, and one's little charities in perhaps one of the dearest capitals in Europe. So far from expecting the demand you have made upon me, I actually, at the moment of receiving yours, had a half-finished note on my writing-table asking you to increase my poor allowance. When I left Castello, I think you had sixteen horses. Can you possibly want more than two for the carriage and one for your own riding? As to your garden and greenhouse expenses, I'll lay ten to one your first peas cost you a guinea a quart, and you never saw a pine at your table under five-and-twenty pounds; and now that I am on the theme of reduction, I would ask what do you want with a chef at two hundred and fifty a year? Do you, or does Ellen, ever eat of anything but the simplest diet at table? Don't you send away the entrées every day, wait for the roast gigot, or the turkey or the woodcocks, and in consequence, does not M. Grégoire leave the cookery to be done by one of his 'aides,' and betake himself to the healthful pursuit of snipe-shooting, and the evening delight of Mrs. Somebody's tea at Portshandon? Why not add this useless extravagance to the condemned list of the vineries, the stable, and the score of other extraordinaries, which an energetic hand would reduce in half-an-hour?

"I'm sure you'll not take it in ill part that I bring these things under your notice. Whether out of the balance in hand you will give me five hundred a year, or only three, I shall ever remain

"Your affectionate brother,

"TEMPLE EDGERTON BRAMLEIGH."

"Read that, Nelly," said Augustus, as he threw it across the table. "I'm almost afraid to say what I think of it."

This was said as they sat in their little lodging in the Rue des Moines: for the letter had been sent through an embassy-bag, and consequently had been weeks on the road, besides lying a month on a tray in the Foreign Office till some idle lounge had taken the caprice to forward it.

"Where does he write from?"

"Her Majesty's Legation at Munich. Lord Culduff is there special, and Temple is acting as secretary to him."

"And does Marion send no message?"

"Oh, yes. She wants all the trunks and carriage-boxes which she left at Castello to be forwarded to town for transmission abroad. I don't think she remembers us much further. She hopes I will not have her old mare sold, but make arrangements for her having a free paddock for the rest of her life, and she adds that you ought to take the pattern of the slipper on her side-saddle, for if it should happen that you ever ride again, you'll find it better than any they make now."

"Considerate at all events. They tell us that love alone remembers trifles. Isn't this a proof of it, Gusty?"

"Read Temple now, and try to put me in better temper with him than I feel at this moment."

"I couldn't feel angry with Temple," said she, quietly. "All he does and all he says so palpably springs from consideration of self, that it would be unjust to resent in him what one would not endure from another. In fact, he means no harm to any one, and a great deal of good to Temple Bramleigh."

"And you think that commendable?"

"I have not said so; but it certainly would not irritate me."

She opened the letter after this and read it over leisurely.

"Well, and what do you say now, Nelly?" asked he.

"That it's Temple all over; he does not know why in this shipwreck every one is not helping to make a lifeboat for him. It seems such an obvious and natural thing to do that he regards the omission as scarcely credible."

"Does he not see—does he not care for the ruin that has overtaken us?"

"Yes, he sees it, and is very sorry for it, but he opines, at the same time, that the smallest amount of the disaster should fall to his share. Here's something very different," said she, taking a letter from her pocket. "This is from Julia. She writes from her little villa at Albano, and asks us to come and stay with them."

"How thoroughly kind and good-natured."

"Was it not, Gusty? She goes over how we are to be lodged, and is full of little plans of pleasure and enjoyment; she adds too, what a benefit you would be to poor George, who is driven half wild with the meddlesome interference of the Church magnates. They dictate to him in everything, and a Mrs. Trumpler actually sends him the texts on which she desires him to hold forth,—while Lady Augusta persecutes him with projects in which theological discussion, as she understands it, is to be carried on in rides over the Campagna, and picnics to the hills behind Albano. Julia says that he will not be able to bear it, without the comfort and companionship of some kind friend, to whom he can have recourse in his moments of difficulty."

"It would be delightful to go there, Nelly, but it is impossible."

"I know it is," said she gravely.

"We could not remove so far from England while this affair is yet undetermined. We must remain where we can communicate easily with Sedley."

"There are scores of reasons against the project," said she, in the same grave tone. "Let us not speak of it more."

Augustus looked at her, but she turned away her face and he could only mark that her cheeks and throat were covered with a deep blush.

"This part of Julia's letter is very curious," said she, turning to the

last page. "They were stopping at a little inn one night where Pracontal and Longworth arrived, and George by a mere accident heard Pracontal declare that he would have given anything to have known you personally, that he desired above everything to be received by you on terms of friendship, and even of kindred; that the whole of this unhappy business could have been settled amicably, and in fact, he never ceased to blame himself for the line into which his lawyer's advice had led him, while all his wishes tended to an opposite direction."

"But Sedley says he has accepted the arrangement, and abandoned all claim in future."

"So he has, and it is for that he blames himself. He says it debars him from the noble part he desired to take."

"I was no part to this compromise, Nelly, remember that. I yielded to reiterated entreaty a most unwilling assent, declaring always that the law must decide the case between us, and the rightful owner have his own. Let not Mr. Pracontal imagine that all the high-principled action is on his side: from the very first I declared that I would not enjoy for an hour what I did not regard undisputably as my own. You can bear witness to this, Nelly. I simply assented to the arrangement, as they called it, to avoid unnecessary scandal. What the law shall decide between us, need call forth no evil passions or ill-will. If the fortune we had believed our own belongs to another, let him have it." The tone of high excitement in which he spoke plainly revealed how far a nervous temperament and a susceptible nature had to do with his present resolve. Nelly had seen this before, but never so fully revealed as now. She knew well the springs which could move him to acts of self-sacrifice and devotion, but she had not thoroughly realized to herself that it was in a paroxysm of honourable emotion he had determined to accept the reverse of fortune, which would leave him penniless in the world.

"No, Nelly!" said he, as he arose and walked the room, with head erect, and a firm step. "We shall not suffer these people who talk slightly of the newly risen gentry to have their scoff unchallenged! It is the cant of the day to talk of mercantile honour and City notions of what is high-minded and right, and I shall show them that *we*—'Lombard Street people,' as some newspaper scribe called us the other day—that we can do things the proudest earl in the Peerage would shrink back from as from a sacrifice he could not dare to face. There can be no sneer at a class that can produce men who accept beggary rather than dishonour. As that Frenchman said, these habits of luxury and splendour were things he had never known,—the want of them would leave no blank in his existence. Whereas to us they were the daily accidents of life—they entered into our ways and habits, and made part of our very natures; giving them up was like giving up ourselves, surrendering an actual identity! You saw our distinguished connection, Lord Culduff, how he replied to my letter—a letter, by the way, I should never have stooped to write—but Sedley had my ear at the time and influenced me against my own convictions.

The noble viscount, however, was free from all extraneous pressure, and he told us as plainly as words could tell it, that he had paid heavily enough already for the honour of being connected with us, and had no intention to contribute another sacrifice. As for Temple—I won't speak of him: poor Jack, how differently he would have behaved in such a crisis."

Happy at the opportunity to draw her brother away, even passing, from a theme that seemed to press upon him unceasingly, she drew from the drawer of a little work-table a small photograph and handed it to him, saying, "Is it not like?"

"Jack!" cried he. "In a sailor's jacket too! what is this?"

"He goes out as a mate to China," said she calmly. "He wrote me but half a dozen lines, but they were full of hope and cheerfulness; he said that he had every prospect of getting a ship, when he was once out; that an old messmate had written to his father—a great merchant at Shanghai—about him, and that he had not the slightest fears for his future."

"Would any one believe in a reverse so complete as this?" cried Augustus, as he clasped his hands before him. "Who ever heard of such ruin in so short a time?"

"Jack certainly takes no despairing view of life," said she quietly.

"What! does he pretend to say it is nothing to descend from his rank as an officer of the navy, with a brilliant prospect before him, and an affluent connection at his back, to be a common sailor, or at best one grade removed from a common sailor, and his whole family beggared? Is this the picture he can afford to look on with pleasure or with hope! The man who sees in his downfall, no sacrifice, or no degradation, has no sympathy of mine. To tell me that he is stout-hearted is absurd, he is simply unfeeling." Nelly's face and even her neck became crimson, and her eyes flashed indignantly; but she repressed the passionate words that were almost on her lips, and taking the photograph from him replaced it in the drawer and turned the key.

"Has Marion written to you?" asked he after a pause.

"Only a few lines. I'm afraid she's not very happy in her exalted condition after all, for she concluded with these words: 'It is a cruel blow that has befallen you, but don't fancy that there are not miseries as hard to bear in life as those which display themselves in public and flaunt their sufferings before the world.'"

"That old fop's temper perhaps is hard to bear with," said he carelessly.

"You must write to George L'Estrange, Gusty," said she coaxingly. "There are no letters he likes so much as yours. He says you are the only one who ever knew how to advise without taking that tone of superiority that is so offensive, and he needs advice just now—he is driven half wild with dictation and interference." She talked on in this strain for some time, till he grew gradually calmer, and his features losing their look of intensity and eagerness, regained their ordinary expression of gentleness and quiet.

"Do you know what was passing through my mind just now?" said he, smiling half sadly. "I was wishing it was George had been Marion's husband instead of Lord Culduff. We'd have been so united, the very narrowness of our fortunes would have banded us more closely together, and I believe, firmly believe, we might have been happier in these days of humble condition, than ever we were in our palmy ones: do you agree with me, Nelly?"

Her face was now crimson, and if Augustus had not been the least observant of men, he must have seen how his words had agitated her. She merely said with affected indifference: "Who can tell how these things would turn out? There's a nice gleam of sunlight, Gusty. Let us have a walk. I'll go for my hat."

She fled from the room before he had time to reply, and the heavy clap of a door soon told that she had reached her chamber.

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#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### AT LOUVAINE.

THERE are few delusions more common with well-to-do people than the belief that if "put to it" they could earn their own livelihood in a variety of ways. Almost every man has some two or three or more accomplishments which he fancies would be quite adequate to his support, and remembering with what success the exercise of these gifts has ever been hailed in the society of his friends, he has a sort of generous dislike to be obliged to eclipse some poor drudge of a professional, who, of course, will be consigned to utter oblivion, after his own performance.

Augustus Bramleigh was certainly not a conceited, or a vain man, and yet he had often in his palmy days imagined how easy it would be for him to provide for his own support: he was something of a musician, he sang pleasingly, he drew a little, he knew something of three or four modern languages, he had that sort of smattering acquaintance with questions of religion, politics, and literature, which the world calls being "well-informed;" and yet nothing short of the grave necessity revealed to him that, towards the object of securing a livelihood, a cobbler in his bulk was out and out his master.

The world has no need of the man of small acquirements, and would rather have its shoes mended by the veriest botch of a professional than by the cleverest amateur that ever studied a Greek sandal.

"Is it not strange, Nelly, that Brydges and Bowes won't take those songs of mine," said he one morning as the post brought him several letters. "They say they are very pretty, and the accompaniments full of taste, but so evidently wanting in originality—such palpable imitations of Gordigiani and Romani—they would meet no success. I ask you, Nelly, am I the man to pilfer from any one. Is it likely I would trade on another man's intellect?"

"That you certainly are not, Gusty! but remember who it is that

utters this criticism. The man who has no other test of goodness but a ready sale, and he sees in this case little hope of such."

"Rankin too refuses my 'Ghost Story;' he calls it too German, whatever that may mean."

"It means simply that he wants to say something and is not very clear what it ought to be. And your water-colour sketch—the Street in Bruges?"

"Worst of all," cried he, interrupting. "Dinetti, with whom I have squandered hundreds for prints and drawings, sends it back with these words in red chalk on the back:—"No distance; no transparency; general muddiness—a bad imitation of Prout's worst manner."

"How unmannerly; how coarse!"

"Yes; these purveyors to the world's taste don't mince matters with their journeymen. They remind them pretty plainly of their shortcomings; but considering how much of pure opinion must enter into these things, they might have uttered their judgments with more diffidence."

"They may not always know what is best, Gusty; but I take it, they can guess very correctly as to what the public will think best."

"How humiliating it makes labour when one has to work to please a popular taste. I always had fancied that the author, or the painter, or the musician, stood on a sort of pedestal, to the foot of which came the publisher, entreating that he might be permitted to catch the utterings of genius, and become the channel through which they should flow into an expectant world; and now I see it is the music-seller, or the print-seller is on the pedestal, and the man of genius kneels at his feet and prays to be patronized."

"I am sure, Gusty," said she, drawing her arm within his, as he stood at the window, "I am sure we must have friends who would find you some employment in the public service that you would not dislike, and you would even take interest in. Let us see first what we could ask for."

"No; first let us think of whom we could ask for it."

"Well, be it so. There is Sir Francis Deighton; isn't he a Cabinet Minister?"

"Yes. My father gave him his first rise in life; but I'm not sure they kept up much intimacy later on."

"I'll write to him, Gusty; he has all the Colonial patronage and could easily make you governor of something to-morrow. Say 'yes;' tell me I may write to him."

"It's not a pleasant task to assign you, dear Nelly," said he, with a sad smile; "and yet I feel you will do it better than I should."

"I shall write," said she, boldly, "with the full assurance that Sir Francis will be well pleased to have an opportunity to serve the son of an old friend and benefactor."

"Perhaps it is that my late defeats have made me cowardly—but I own, Nelly, I am less than hopeful of success."

"And I am full of confidence. Shall I show you my letter when I have written it?"

"Better not, Nelly. I might begin to question the prudence of this, or the taste of that, and end by asking you to suppress it all. Do what you like then, and in your own way."

Nelly was not sorry to obtain permission to act free of all trammels, and went off to her room to write her letter. It was not till after many attempts that she succeeded in framing an epistle to her satisfaction. She did not wish—while reminding Sir Francis of whom it was she was speaking—to recall to him any unpleasant sentiment of an old obligation: she simply adverted to her father's long friendship for him, but dropped nothing of his once patronage. She spoke of their reverse in fortune with dignity, and in the spirit of one who could declare proudly that their decline in station involved no loss of honour, and she asked that some employment might be bestowed on her brother, as upon one well deserving of such a charge.

"I hope there is nothing of the suppliant in all this?" "I hope it is such a note as Gusty would have approved of, and that my eagerness to succeed has involved me in no undue humility." Again and again she read it over; revising this, and changing that, till at length grown impatient, she folded it up and addressed it, saying aloud: "There, it is in the chance humour of him who reads, not in the skill of the writer, lies the luck of such epistles."

"You forgot to call him Right Honourable, Nelly," said Augustus, as he looked at the superscription.

"I'm afraid I've forgotten more than that, Gusty; but let us hope for the best."

"What did you ask for?"

"Anything,—whatever he can give you, and is disposed to give, I've said. We are in that category where the proverb says—there is no choice."

"I'd not have said that, Nelly."

"I know that, and it is precisely on that account that I said it for you. Remember, Gusty, you changed our last fifty pounds in the world yesterday."

"That's true," said he, sitting down near the table, and covering his face with both hands.

"There's a gentleman belowstairs, madam, wishes to know if he could see Mr. Bramleigh," said the landlady entering the room.

"Do you know his name?" said Nelly, seeing that as her brother paid no attention to the announcement, it might be as well not to admit a visitor.

"This is his card, madam."

"Mr. Cutbill!" said Nelly, reading aloud. "Gusty," added she, bending over him, and whispering in his ear, "would you see Mr. Cutbill?"

"I don't care to see him," muttered he, and then rising he added: "Well, let him come up; but mind, Nelly, we must on no account ask him to stay and dine with us."

She nodded assent, and the landlady retired to introduce the stranger.

## The Three Lyrists ; Horace, Burns, and Béranger.

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THE mystical fascination which the Number Three used to exercise over the human mind, receives some excuse from interesting facts in the history of literature. Thus, there are three supreme epic poets, Homer, Virgil, and Milton. There are three masters of Greek tragedy, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. There are three unrivalled satirists, Aristophanes, Rabelais, and Swift. And there are three lyrists, who stand out in the annals of song, enjoying a popularity beyond all competition,—Horace, Burns, and Béranger. It is with the last triad that our business lies at present. It seems to us that each of them may be better understood if all three be compared together; and that whatever essential similarity can be shown to exist between them, will tend to throw light on the lyrical character and the lyrical genius.

The points of coincidence in the condition and temperament of these men of different nations, are curious, to begin with. They were all of humble degree by birth, yet more or less fortunate in some circumstances of their training. They were all, for parts of their career, in Government employment. They all early found patrons among men of rank. They all held a kind of mixed politics, the result of the fluctuations of the ages in which they lived. They all enjoyed popularity during their lifetimes. All three were strongly susceptible of religious impressions, but hostile to prevailing dogmatism and superstition; keenly alive to the love of friends, and the charm of women; deeply tinged with melancholy, though cheerful at ordinary times, and hilarious on festal occasions. All were patriotic to a degree exceeding the zeal of common men. And though the basis of their genius in each case was a gift of creative spontaneity which defies analysis, they all alike worked on traditionary material, literary and musical; and worked on it in the true artistic spirit,—with much love of form, finish, symmetry, and grace. Finally, what is profoundly significant, these three song-writers all began with satire,—a thoroughly humorous vein of satire being common to the group.

In order to draw out this parallel with any fullness, it will be best that we should take a glance at each of our lyrists separately. Béranger has been little discussed in England, considering his European celebrity, and the material illustrative of him at the disposal of students. Horace and Burns are more talked of; but the latest views regarding even these poets are far from being as generally known as some people suppose.

It is a strange thing to reflect upon, that Horace, who died one winter's day just eighteen hundred and seventy-five years ago, should have more readers even yet, than either Burns or Béranger. We

apprehend, however, that this admits of no doubt. It is another piquant fact of the kind, that even these evergreen classical reputations have their good and bad seasons,—their periods of fashion and of neglect. In the eighteenth century, we hear of Horace everywhere, from the pulpit to the ball-room. But for many years after our own century opened, he was no longer the mode. He ceased, as Niebuhr says, to have justice done him; and in the lectures which Niebuhr delivered at Bonn in 1828-9, that great scholar protested against the reaction. Since then, there has been a highly active Horatian movement in literature. Hofman Peerlkamp, a Dutch professor of great distinction, gave an impulse to this, in an unusual way. He issued, in 1833, a work, the object of which was to show that a good deal of the present text of Horace is spurious and supposititious. Such audacity roused the Germans, and the subject can hardly be said to have gone to sleep again yet. But the revival extended beyond the province of criticism, strictly so-called. Canon Tate and Dean Milman in England, Baron Valckenaer and others in France, conducted excellent investigations of the poet's whole life and genius,—and, indeed, his life had been treated with injustice as well as his genius. Translations, too, have multiplied, till a certain impatience of them has become manifest. Some are spirited and sympathetic paraphrases, like those of Father Prout and Lord Derby; some are more severe, but equally able, like those of Professor Conington. Others, again, repeating the error of Francis in new shapes, are loose in style, and modern in character,—echoes of Moore rather than of Horace.

Meanwhile, substantial agreement may be said to have been arrived at on some long-agitated Horatian questions. The old poet's character emerges out of the latest discussions as sound and loveable as ever. A Brutus and Cassius man in his youth, he gave in his intellectual adhesion to the Emperor only when the Empire had become a distinct and beneficent necessity. It was, in fact, his own cause, for the raising of new men, and the encouragement of letters were essential parts of the Cæsarean policy. But he could still sing the praise of "the noble death of Cato." Nor was there anything servile in his attitude towards Augustus, whose services to the State he celebrated in a manly and independent kind of way. Augustus chid him playfully for not courting him more. Compared with the attitude of Boileau to such a ruler as Louis Quatorze, that of Horace towards Augustus—who, whatever else we may think of him, was one of the ablest sovereigns that ever lived—stands out with something of a classical dignity. With regard to his private life, what writer has shown more filial piety, or shown it with a finer disregard of all the mean social fears which beset low natures in unexpected prosperity? What man has ever been more familiar with the rarer and sweeter natures of his time? As for his morals, he would not have understood what is held on some branches of morals by the modern world, which has no right to measure him by its own standards. And Buttmann did a good deal to put people right on one matter at least, when he subjected the heroines of the love-

songs to a critical inquiry. There are some eighteen of them, but they vanish away when looked at closely. The Pyrrhas and Glyceras are mere Greek statuettes. The Lalage of one lyric is not the Lalage of another; and Lydia dissolves into two figures, one as shadowy as its sister. Mr. Newman contends for the historical reality of Cinara, and is a little annoyed with Horace for not having married her. But even Cinara proves to have been a mere name on investigation. These hours of literature, with yellow and myrrh-scented hair, and crowns of ivy or rose leaves, were just as much Greek ornaments of Horace's library as the figures which Atticus bought in Athens for the library of his friend Cicero's Tusculan villa. The fact is, that in one whole class of his Odes, our friend the Venusian simply used the Latin language as an ivory on which to paint Greek subjects. This is so indisputable, that he has often been treated within the last half century or so as a mere imitator, whose satires and epistles alone deserve much admiration. But to talk in this way, is to talk just as great nonsense as those gentlemen who pretend to know all about the family of Tyndaris; or who believe Horace to be in downright earnest when he relates how, having fallen asleep in his childhood on Mount Vultur in Apulia, doves came and covered him with leaves of laurel and myrtle. He imitated the Greek lyrists undoubtedly; and there is a sense in which Burns imitated the old Scotch song-writers, and Béranger the *chansonniers* of the eighteenth century. Tradition is essential to the popular lyrist, who must also avail himself, in order to seize the popular heart, of known and familiar artistic forms,—just as of known and familiar airs or tunes. But through imitation Horace learned to be original. The charming odes addressed to his friends Septimius, Pompeius Varus, and others, are not fancy-pieces, but fresh from life; while such noble passages as the description of Regulus in the *Calo tonantem* are thoroughly Roman. Scholars who insist too much on the imitative side of Horace's labours, seem to forget that the Greek lyrists Alcæus, Sappho, and others, continued to exist alongside him for many ages, and that, if he had been anything like a mere echo of them, his works would have been allowed to fall into oblivion. As it was, he appears to have been as popular through the whole Roman empire as Béranger in France, or Burns in Great Britain. We cannot say, indeed, how far it was possible for a writer to penetrate the masses in a civilization of which slavery formed so large a feature; but there is evidence enough that Horace was as widely known as any classical writer could become. Now, it is a cardinal point about our three lyrists, and their own peculiar triumph, that they gained the multitude without losing the cultivated classes. "If anybody provokes me," boasts Horace, "he shall weep for it, and be sung about all through the city." Béranger, whose songs were heard in every *cabaret*, tells us, not without complacency, that Louis XVIII. was accused of having them on his night-table when he died. Who such a formidable enemy of the Bourbons as Béranger? But the head of the Bourbons was a great lover of Horace, and knew a truly

good song when he saw it. Success of this double kind is by no means the necessary attendant of all kinds of lyrical greatness. Odes like those of Gray or Wordsworth, even songs like some of Mr. Tennyson's, are not addressed to the people. What can be grander in its way, for example, than Tennyson's bugle-song? But take a stanza of it:—

O love, they die, in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill, and field, and river;  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.

Who can even imagine a stanza like this being sung by a country girl, while spreading her webs to bleach near a running stream?

This illustration of a poet's popularity is taken from Allan Cunningham, who records it as his own experience in the matter of the popularity of the songs of Burns. Burns, like Horace, has been differently estimated at different periods, since his death in 1796, ten years after his poems burst upon the world. His first biographers, including even Dr. Currie, obviously underrated him; and Walker especially (of whom the world would never have heard but for his acquaintance with the great man) writes in an intolerable and contemptible strain of patronage. It was the misfortune of Burns to be born in an age when Scotland had ceased to be a kingdom, without having reconciled herself to the condition of a province. In an earlier time he would have been happier, for whatever his circumstances his heart would have been more at peace. In a later time, he would have emigrated young, risen to fame and fortune, and left, probably, greater contributions to literature than any of those for the sake of which the world cherishes his memory. As it was, he fell upon a generation whose society and literature were both eminently artificial, and wrote his best things in a language the doom of which was already sealed. His whole life was thus a moral struggle, as well as a physical and social one; a struggle between a loyal romantic Scots heart, and a society fallen into narrow divisions, with their class prejudices and local meannesses; between the consciousness of original power, and the check imposed by the over-valuing of mere formal education on the part of an age which had forgotten what poetic originality really was. We hear much of Burns's flattering reception, in the winter of 1786, by the Edinburgh men of letters. But they were after all mere mediocrities; for the era of Hume had passed away, and the era of Scott had not opened. Hume was dead; Adam Smith was in declining health, and suffering from the depression of spirits which overtook him after the loss of his mother. Those whose names one hears as receiving Burns—let us say Blair and Mackenzie, for instance—wanted a relish for real genius, and evidently regarded the poor bard as a miraculous Ayrshire ploughman who thought much too highly of himself. Indeed, gross exaggeration long prevailed on the subject of Burns's actual position and attainments. He was not a peasant at all, to begin with, but came of an old stock of Kincardineshire farmers, who seem to have been people of some superiority, for his grandfather is

found joining his brother agriculturists in setting up a school. His reading, from boyhood upwards, was what would have been thought respectable in almost any class of life at that time; for, with all the talk about Scotch education, it is the diffusion, rather than the degree of knowledge of any kind, that makes the Northern kingdom remarkable. But though in reality no vulgar portent, Burns was too much treated as such; and he left Edinburgh with stings lurking in his breast, for which the hospitality that curiosity about him had excited, did not compensate. His drinking-bouts with what he calls "the stately patricians" of Edinburgh, produced not only headaches, but heartaches, which were much worse to bear.

That Burns's poems should have been admired, can hardly be claimed as a credit for that generation. Their power is so glaringly undeniable; they are so superior to any Scottish poems that the country had seen for centuries; that to overlook them would have been simple barbarism. Yet they only reached two editions in Burns's life-time, though he lived ten years after achieving his fame. Nor are those apologists more successful who would extenuate the meanness of the sordid patronage which placed him in an employment of seventy pounds a year. Scotland, through the influence of Dundas, had a large share of crown patronage at that time, but it was bestowed on those who had no claims but relationship, or who made up for the want of that, by the qualities so admirably portrayed in Sir Pertinax Macsycophant. Lord Brougham and the late Mr. McCulloch are not unnaturally surprised that Adam Smith should have been fobbed off with a commissionership of customs. But this was a joke to making Burns a gauger. And it is no excuse to say that he was "a poet, and as a poet unfit for business." There are, indeed, some morbid modern poets of peculiar schools who shrink even from criticism; who are afraid of being looked at; and who are capable of nothing but producing their highly artificial stuff in a retirement cheered by the occasional company of toadies. But the type of poet we are investigating just now is quite a different kind of man. Whether it be the strong vein of humour which seems an essential part of him, that widens the lyrist of this class, or not, certainly he has always sound common-sense, and tact, and a practical faculty for affairs. Burns astonished people as much by the judgment with which he behaved in a society quite new to him, as by his genius. His talk and correspondence were admirable, and the extant papers of the excise show that he quickly learned, and excellently discharged, all kinds of business that came in his way. The similar qualities of Horace, whose lot was cast among a more generous people, were chiefly displayed in the mixture of taste and discretion with which he filled his place in the high Imperial society. As for Béranger, some of the ablest men in France loved to illustrate his good worldly wisdom by comparing it to that of Franklin.

Burns was undoubtedly the least fortunate man of our group, from every point of view. The best friend that his genius got for him, the Earl of Glencairn, who might perhaps have been to the poet something of what Mæcenas was to Horace, or Prince Lucien Bonaparte to Béranger,

was cut off by death. Yet his name will last if only in these beautiful lines :—

The bridegroom may forget the bride,  
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;  
The monarch may forget the crown  
That on his head an hour has been;  
The mother may forget the child,  
That smiles sac sweetly on her knee;  
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,  
And a' that thou hast done for me.

For this "Lament" promises to live as long as the *Tyrrhena regum progenies*, on the one hand; or the *dédicace* of the *Chansons* published in 1833, on the other. There was a strong romantic element—a feudal feeling akin to that of Sir Walter—in the original attitude of Burns towards the ancient Scotch families. It is seen very clearly in his curious Jacobite letter to Lady Winifred Maxwell, the heiress of the Earl of Nithsdale; in his correspondence with Mrs. Dunlop, who came of the Wallace blood; in the dedication of his second edition to the Caledonian Hunt; and in the high-spirited heart-stirring "Address to Edinburgh." We are reminded in the last poem, of the :—

Quid debeas, O Roma, Neronibus,  
Testis Metaurum flumen—

and not a few similar passages, of Horace. But the stern experience of life taught Burns that the time for generous illusions was gone by. The Jacobite became a Jacobin, or something like it. The poet who had addressed Mr. Tytler, the champion of Mary Stuart, in such verses as these—

My fathers that name have revered on a throne,  
My fathers have fallen to right it;  
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,  
That name should he willingly slight it—

lived to sing "A Man's a Man for a' that," and to welcome the French Revolution. If, at one end of his career, he could, like the Roman poet, think kindly of the Etrurian grandees, and of the Claudii, and Lamie, of his Northern land,—at the other end of it, he handed over his torch to one who cared little indeed for such recollections and associations,—a child of the Revolution destined to perpetuate its glories, and to continue its work. Fate seems to have curiously linked together these lyrists; and Béranger, who knew neither the language of Rome, nor of Great Britain, lived to be repeatedly entitled "the Horace," and "the Robert Burns," of France, by men well competent to judge of both.

Burns, like Horace, had enjoyed the advantage of being the son of a good and wise father; and of receiving that sound domestic training which books cannot give, and which the want of books does not necessarily impair. It is curious to compare the Roman poet's grateful record of the excellent old freedman who kept his youth pure from all corruption :—

Servavit ab omni  
Non solum facto, verum opprobrio quoque turpi—

with the Scotch poet's similar testimony to the equally humble and admirable cotter of Ayrshire;—

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border, O,  
And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O.

Pierre Jean de Béranger, born in the Rue Montorgueil, in Paris, in August, 1780, was less happily situated in this important respect. His father was a Picard from the neighbourhood of Péronne, a good-natured careless Frenchman, of volatile character, and wandering habits, in whom, or his career, we can trace none of the solid qualities which belonged to his celebrated son. The father of this De Béranger had kept a *cabaret* near Péronne, having been abandoned by *his* father, who re-married in England, and whose name and designation were Béranger de Formentel. But in spite of their condition, the father and grandfather of the poet resolutely maintained a claim to belong to the *noblesse*, and bequeathed him (their only legacy), a genealogy in which they asserted themselves to be descended from the great house of the Counts of Béranger in Provence. The poet was described as *De Béranger* in his *acte de naissance*, and through life adhered to "the particle;" that famous particle, the right to bear which is so fertile a theme for pleasantry among the wits of Paris, and about which Balzac was so persistently tormented. Béranger, we need not say, became as fervent a democrat as his father was a royalist, and made the "*de*" the occasion for a celebrated song:—

Et quoi ! j'apprends que l'on critique,  
Le *de* qui précède mon nom.

\* \* \*

Je suis vilain et très-vilain . . .  
Je suis vilain,  
Vilain, vilain.

He tells us, however, that he could have passed for a noble if he had liked; though it is no wonder that he never cared for the subject, bred among the people as he was, and making of the ideas of the Revolution a life-long worship. His youthful training was of a vague and various kind. His father, after having been a lawyer's clerk in the provinces, came to Paris, where he fell in love with the lively and attractive daughter of a tailor, in whose house the song-writer was born. The father and mother separated in six months. The father wandered away to Anjou and elsewhere in search of employment, and the mother went to live by herself, while young Pierre Jean continued under the roof of the good old tailor. Sometimes he went to see her, and she would take him to the theatres in the Boulevards, or to little dances in the country; so that he learned something of the strange drama of human life in Paris even before learning to read. And what a drama life in Paris was during the boyhood of Béranger, who grew up in a Revolution, as Horace had done before! At nine years of age he saw the taking of the Bastille from the roof of a house in the Faubourg St. Antoine, where he had been sent to school, but where

he got no other lesson, he says, than the lesson of that spectacle.\* In the October of the same year, 1789, while walking with one of his aunts, they found themselves surrounded by a crowd of men, and of women of dreadful appearance. They were carrying the bloody heads of the *gardes-du-corps*, massacred at Versailles, on pikes; and one of these heads passed quite close to the shuddering boy. When thinking of it, adds he long afterwards, I can see it yet; and he thanked Heaven that he had been away from Paris during the Terror.

He escaped the scenes of that worst period of the Revolution (which, Republican as he was, he always deplored,) by having been sent to an aunt at Péronne. The good poor woman looked at the lad of nine years and a half, whose grandfather could no longer maintain him; whose father freed himself from him as a burden; whose very mother gave herself no thought about his fate; and who had been sent to her by the diligence as a kind of worthless parcel of humanity to be stowed away as she best could. "It is impossible for me to charge myself with him," said she, in her perplexity; and Béranger never forgot that moment. "Scenes like these," he remarks, "quickly ripen reason in those who are born to a little of it!" But the honest kindly aunt, a moment afterwards, clasped little Pierre Jean, with tears in her eyes, and exclaimed, "*Pauvre abandonné!* I will be to you a mother!" "Never," writes the grateful poet, "never was promise better kept!" She will be remembered in literary history, in her turn, with the *libertinus* of Venusia, and the grave kindly Scots father, who sleeps in Alloway kirkyard. Béranger calls her his real mother; and describes her as a woman of superior mind, who had made up for a defective education by serious and select reading. He was still unable to read aloud when she received him, though he had already contrived to get through the *Henriade*. She took him in hand, with the aid of a *Racine*, a *Télémaque*, and Voltaire's dramas; and an old schoolmaster taught him to write and cipher.

This excellent aunt's position was that of keeper of a small inn; and, as may be supposed, she could not bestow on her nephew anything like a high education. He remained through life, in his own words, unable to decline *musa*, a muse, or *rosa*, a rose; and ignorant of every language but that of his own land. We all know the attitude towards the ancient masters which a misfortune of this kind would have caused a narrow-minded mediocrity to assume. Such a man would have gone through life protesting that the Falernian grapes were sour; would have sneered at classical scholars; and made hazardous jests about "Greek particles" without any distinct idea of the place occupied by the particles in the structure of the language. But Béranger was a man of genius, and

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\* *Ma Biographie*,—a posthumous work, and an admirable contribution to autobiographical literature. The prose of Béranger is scarcely, if at all, less excellent than his verse. In the satires and epistles of Horace we can see the capacity for a prose style, if need be; while that of Burns (though occasionally turgid) is full of vigour and animation.

an honest man. Circumstances did not enable him to teach himself Latin, as Rousseau had done. But he always deplored his want of such knowledge as a misfortune; and he has expressed the feeling in remarkable passages of his letters. His ignorance of Latin gave him more pain, he declares, than all that he suffered from the poverty of his youth. "Horace is to me," he writes, "the Unknown God!"\* "The happiness I most envy is that of knowing Greek."† But perhaps he exaggerated his disadvantages after all. For he was a great student of the best translations, to begin with; especially those of Aristophanes, who had a perfect fascination for him. And then there were the best models of his own brilliant and graceful literature, which he studied thoroughly. From a very early period he loved the standard old French models, in spite of his sympathy with the Revolution, and its influence on literature. He had no respect for the extravagance and eccentricities to which the Romantic movement led; or with the "easy writing" of later times. "If this sort of thing goes on," are his words, "Racine and La Fontaine will soon be in want of translators."—"We shall soon have people writing," observes he elsewhere, "who have not learned to read." He did not belong, he protests, to the creators of what is called *la littérature facile*,—"the mortal foe of that other literature which has been the joy of my life, and was once the pride of France!" In precisely the same spirit, Horace toiled lovingly at the *exemplaria Græca*; and Burns compared, sifted, analysed, the old Scotch ballads and songs, and the poems of Thomson, Collins, Shenstone, and the Queen Anne men.

Béranger remained in Péronne till he had reached the age of fifteen, having passed two years of the time in a printing-office—a part of his experience to which he always looked back with interest. He had also attended, during a small portion of this period, a gratuitous primary school, one of the thousand new schemes which the ferment of revolution had inspired. Meanwhile, the Revolution itself, and its results, were giving him an education of their own, which blended strangely with the charm of the sonorous elegance, or exquisite and delicate playfulness, of the writers of Louis Quatorze. He attended a club where republican songs were sung, and republican speeches made, an influence to which he attributed the birth in him of *le goût de la chanson*. His aunt herself was full of the enthusiasm of the hour, with which the whole moral air of France was hot. The boom of the cannon of the English and Austrian forces besieging Valenciennes reached Péronne at the distance of sixteen leagues across the plains of Picardy, and woke an echo of hatred of the foreigner in young Béranger's sensitive heart. When a salute announced to the town that Toulon had been retaken, he was on the ramparts, and at every gun his heart throbbed with such violence that he was obliged to sit down to recover his breath. If young Burns, some twenty-five years before, had glowed with patriotic passion on reading of Wallace, what must have been the emotions of a French youngster of kindred soul, with the enemy

\* *Correspondance de Béranger*, vol. ii. p. 137-212.

† *Ib.* vol. iii. 410.

on the frontier? The love of the national flag, and a certain jealousy of the foreigner, lasted with Béranger through the whole of his long life. In spite of all his admiration for Voltaire, both as genius and reformer, he scarcely ever forgave him his zeal for foreigners, and he never forgave him his outrage to the memory of Joan of Arc.

When Béranger returned to Paris, not long before the time of Burns's death at Dumfries, he found his father and mother living together again, and his father engaged in operations on the Bourse, and Royalist intrigues. Béranger's mother, whom, as he relates, he nowise resembled, either physically or morally, died soon afterwards—her life having been shortened by her "*imprudences*"—at the age of thirty-seven. The young Béranger joined his father in his money dealings, and became a clever financier; and he got some near glimpses of the kind of men who were plotting for the return of the Bourbons. But in 1798 the house broke down, and the growing poet—for he had already written much verse—found himself plunged in poverty. This period of his life corresponds to the period which intervened in the life of Horace between the battle of Philippi and the gift from Mæcenas of the Sabine Farm. Among the earliest of Horace's writings were his Archilochian Iambics against upstarts like Vedius Rufus; Béranger wrote Alexandrines against Barras and his adherents; and rejoiced when Bonaparte overthrew the Directory. Republican as he was, he thought Napoleon—just as Horace thought Augustus at Rome—the only man capable of governing his disordered country. He admired him, besides, for the genius which had covered the French arms with glory; and sympathised with him, as a new man whose career was itself an embodiment of the hopes and ideas of the Revolution. Looking back to those days, long afterwards, he speaks of them as a time "when I was often hungry, but when France was great and glorious!" He was, indeed, poor enough; poorer than Horace had ever been in his worst days, without, like Horace, having enjoyed a high cultivation. He lived in a garret on the sixth story, in the Boulevard Saint Martin, where the new century found him living on bread and cheese and writing poetry, with a wardrobe consisting of three bad shirts, ("*qu'une main amie se fatiguait à raccomoder,*") and everything else to match. "I was so poor!"—he tells a friend of after years. "The humblest party of pleasure forced me to live on *panade* which I made myself." \* Yet there were such little parties, sometimes; and there were friends, and love, and songs; and, in spite of all its hardships, Béranger seems to have looked back to that phase of his life with much more pleasure than pain. It was the period of the *Grenier* and of *Lisette*, and is represented by some of the most charming of his songs; for the song-writer, more than any other poet, pours out himself, and his life may be traced from point to point in his strains, as the year is marked by the succession of the notes of different birds.

Béranger was cheerful and hopeful; but the view from his little garret-

\* *Correspondance*, vol. i, 423.

window, in spite of its occasional adornment by a curtain in the shape of Lisette's shawl, continued to be dark. One day in the beginning of 1804, it occurred to him to send some of his manuscript poems to Lucien Bonaparte, the most lettered man of the Bonaparte family. He selected for the purpose two copies of dithyrambic verses of four or five hundred lines, and enclosed them with a private communication. Two days passed, when a letter arrived, which Béranger opened with a trembling hand. The senator had read the poems, and wished to see the poet! "My eyes filled with tears," are Béranger's words; "and I gave thanks to God, whom I have never forgotten in my moments of prosperity." The reader can fancy the situation. It was that of Horace, when, after the introduction of Varius and Virgil, the Etruscan grandee opened his heart to him; that of Burns, when the letter of good Dr. Blacklock reached him, just as, flying from bailiffs and intolerable misery, he was about to embark at Greenock for the West Indies. Béranger borrowed some better clothes than his own, and hastened to present himself to the brother of the First Consul. Lucien received him with every kindness, and having to leave for Rome soon afterwards, assigned to him his allowance as a member of the Institute. There were three years of the *traitement* in arrears, which Béranger received at once. The lyricist is a kindly and loyal man. Béranger made over the greatest part of this sum to his father; exactly as Burns advanced two hundred of the five hundred pounds which he got for his second edition to his brother Gilbert. The good effect of having Lucien for a patron did not stop with the income of a thousand francs a year. It indirectly led to Béranger's being employed by the painter Landon in preparing a list of drawings of the pictures and statues in the galleries of the Louvre, then yearly enriched by the plunder of Europe. The poet could now help, not only his father, but his sister, and the widow of the "good old tailor," as he always calls him, his grandsire.

Three years later, and still through the indirect operation of the patronage of Lucien, Béranger obtained a clerkship in the department of Public Instruction. He began to be known, too, among men of letters; and his genius ripened under the influence of his constant reading and observation. The writings of Chateaubriand made a deep impression upon Béranger. He owed it to Chateaubriand, he says, that he was ever anything more than a Voltairian, and that he remained through life a spiritualist rather than a materialist in his philosophy. The spirit of the nineteenth century finding expression through an improved form of the style of the eighteenth,—that is the combination which the songs of Béranger present to us. Though a writer of songs from early youth, Béranger tried several other species of composition before devoting himself entirely to the *genre*. We hear of a poem about Clovis; of a poem about Joan of Arc; of comedies. But he never contrived to satisfy himself in these fields; nor was it till 1813 that his reputation as a song-writer began to spread, and to encourage him to cultivate more than ever his special talent. The *Sénateur*, the *Petit Homme Gris*, the *Gueux*, but above all

the *Roi d'Yvetot*, ran through society in manuscript copies, and delighted the lovers of such things,—always, observes Béranger, a numerous body in France. The *Roi d'Yvetot*,—that delightful little portrait of a kind of French King of Brentford, whose crown was a nightcap; his guard a dog; and who journeys round his kingdom on a donkey—was a comic but kindly satire on the Imperial policy, and had a great success:—

Oh ! oh ! oh ! oh ! ah ! ah ! ah ! ah !

Quel bon petit Roi c'était là !

La, la.

Béranger was elected to the *Caveau*, a club of wits and song-writers, presided over by Désaugiers, who held a place in it corresponding to that held by Charles Collé in the *Caveau* of the previous century. Of all the song-writers of that century which loved song so much, Collé was the gayest and most pungent. There is a neatness and grace,—a smartness, piquancy, and prettiness together,—suggesting a kind of cracker bonbons for the suppers of the gods,—about his *chansons joyeuses*. But, unfortunately, it is almost impossible to quote them; they are fit only for that private room in the Bourbon Museum at Naples, which zeal for classical learning alone, (no doubt) induces so many travellers to visit, but from which youths under eighteen are rigorously excluded. Collé was private reader to the Duke of Orleans, for the entertainment of whom and his friends he wrote songs, and little theatrical pieces, and he knew the tone of his society. There is *gaillardise* enough in Béranger's songs, especially the early ones. But Béranger,—and this is his great distinction,—elevated the *chanson*, both morally and intellectually. In the hands of Collé, it was an aristocratic toy; in the hands of Béranger, it became a popular weapon.

The return of the Bourbons gave Béranger an admirable opportunity of employing it in its new character. Although a Bonapartist, he had never been an Imperialist. But when he saw foreign troops in possession of Paris, and a king whose very presence suggested national humiliation, his sense of the despotic character of Napoleon's government gradually grew weaker, and was succeeded by a kind of romantic tenderness for a name and family associated with so much glory and so much misfortune. The violet became in a kind of manner to him, what the white rose once was to Burns; and his "Charlie" was so far away "over the water,"—all the weary way to an island in another hemisphere! There were other conditions of the Restoration hateful to Béranger. Grandees of the emigration had come back, cherishing the vain hope that the whole changes of the last thirty years could be reversed, and the old society restored with the old dynasty. The *Marquis de Carabas* was the type of this class of inane fogies in Béranger's satire:—

\* \* \*  
Vers son vieux castel

Ce noble mortel

Marche en brandissant

Un sabre innocent.

Chapeau bas ! chapeau bas !

Gloire au Marquis de Carabas !

Nor were the Marquesses of Carabas the only unwelcome visitors in Béranger's eyes. On all hands he heard the re-establishment of religious orders hopefully advocated. The Capuchins were to begin life again; the Jesuits were busy; a whole swarm of dusky creatures came to the light,—like disagreeable reptiles, of the slug or beetle kind, after a thunder shower! In the powerful satire, *Le Bon Dieu*, there is a piquant stanza on such as these:—

Je nourris d'autres nains tout noirs  
*Dont mon nez craint les encensoirs.*  
 Ils font de la vie un carême,  
 En mon nom lancent l'anathème  
 Dans des sermons fort beaux, ma foi,  
 Mais qui sont de l'hebren pour moi.  
 Si je crois rien de ce qu'on y rapporte,  
 Je veux, mes enfants, que le diable m' emporte,  
 Je veux bien que le diable m' emporte.

In *Les Capucins*, too, there is a lively satirical movement:—

La faim désole nos provinces;  
 Mais la pitié l'en bannit;  
 Chaque fête grâces à nos princes,  
 On peut vivre de pain béni.  
 Bénis soient la Vierge et les saints;  
 On rétablit les Capucins!

In these ecclesiastical satires we have the counterparts of those which Burns produced during the Old and New Light controversy in Ayrshire—*The Twa Herds*, for example, and *Holy Willie's Prayer*. But while the Scot had a miserably narrow field of action—dealing, as he did, with the provincial squabbles of an unlettered clergy, and writing in a *patois*—the Frenchman's audience soon became European. The annoyance of the Government, and its prosecutions, cost him the loss of his place in the *bureaux* of the university, and two terms of imprisonment,—one in 1821, in St. Pelagie; the other in 1828, in La Force. But the sale of his volumes not only more than compensated for his place, but became a source of revenue for life. Success raised Burns to the position of—a gauger; with the privilege of dining at the houses of lairds who made him drunk, and whose wives sometimes cut him for the breaches of manners which such drunkenness produced. Success made Béranger not only independent in means, but one of the chiefs of the Opposition in France—the associate in politics of Lafayette, Dupont (de l'Eure), Benjamin Constant, Manuel, Thiers; the friend of Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, Lamennais, Lamartine. Under Louis Philippe, office was open to him if he had been ambitious. A hint would have secured him a *fauteuil* in the Academy. But he kept aloof from such worlds; lived much in retirement—part of the time at Passy, Fontainebleau, and Tours; did a thousand acts of kindness and generosity, and lived and died a simple *chansonnier*. In the course of the last Revolution he was elected to a seat in the Assembly, but he resigned it almost immediately. When his

life closed at a great age in 1857, so potent was the magic of his name, that the Imperial Government feared a republican movement at his funeral, and gave him public obsequies itself. The old tailor's grandson went to his grave between troops of soldiers stretching for miles, and with a whole city looking on, from roof to pavement. Shouts of "*Honneur à Béranger!*" rose and fell along the streets as the procession passed. These were, no doubt, what Horace would have called *supervacui honores*; but they are pleasant to think of as signs of the gratitude of a nation.

We have indicated, we think, not a few points of similarity in the fortunes and characters of the Three Lyrists; and such might be remarked even in the persons of at least two of them. Horace and Béranger were both little men; stoutish in middle age; one of them gray, the other bald, before his time; and of simple costume and manners. Of the face of Horace, we only know that his eyes, which were apt to suffer from weakness, were dark. The eyes of Béranger were large and blue; and his arched lips, sensitive and voluptuous, gave peculiar expression to a smile at once kindly and melancholy. The little Frenchman, too, had a large head, leaning towards his right shoulder, which was quaintly compared by one of his friends to "a skull of St. Chrysostom, with a face of Bacchus."\* Horace and Béranger were men of town life—men formed by capitals; and the effect of this is seen in their writings. Burns had much of the character, as of the appearance, of the farmer; his manly build, his fresh complexion lighted up by dark eyes of singular lustre and beauty, suggested recollections of the hills and rivers, and the rainy West.

The emphatic distinction of the song-writer is not only that his songs are himself, but that in himself he is a high poetic representative of the common man. There are poets, and some of the greatest, who form a kind of caste, a sacred college, among themselves. One cannot fancy a small Æschylus, a little Milton, a miniature Wordsworth. If an ordinary writer attempted to write like these demigods of literature, he would give pleasure to no human being. In their high walk, you must be a demigod, or nothing. But the kind of charm which belongs to a Horace or a Béranger is simply the highest expression of a keenness of sense and quickness of feeling, which exist in less degree among many inferior men. They are the poets of the common world—not the commonplace world, which is a separate thing—but still the every-day world of their own generation. They express, with the peculiar and incomparable felicity of genius, the prevailing half-conscious thought of their time, and give voice to the universal passions which play through the life of the human race. Hence, each of them is a man relished by his contemporaries, and strongly national; and hence, also, their resemblance to each other, in spite of differences of race, epoch, and language. For the great elementary conditions of human existence are pretty much the same everywhere. All nations and ages worth taking cognizance of in literature have enjoyed the

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\* *Béranger et Lamennais*. Paris, 1861.

praises of good and the ridicule of bad men; the celebration of national glory, the beauty of the revolving seasons, or the pleasures of love and wine. The song-writer's soul is not "a star" that "dwells apart." He is a man of the world, with the sympathies and interests of the mass of men, and with his share of their frailties.

In a paper of this kind, where our object is to illustrate the type, rather than to analyse minutely the individual, we naturally dwell on the resemblances by which the existence of the type is proved, and its essential characteristics distinguished. All the leading themes of the song-writer are handled by these three lyrists in a similar spirit. Horace has his vein of natural piety, but he is against superstition. He tells rustic Phidyle that the simplest offering from a pure hand and an open heart is as welcome to the gods as the slaughter of ponderous oxen; a doctrine quite in accordance with that of the *Cotter's Saturday Night*, and with the inspiration of Béranger's *Dieu des Bonnes gens*. He loves the coolness of wells and the splash of fountains, the shade of the poplar and pine, the sound of music among the Sabine rocks; as Burns the wimpling of a Scotch stream through a glen or underneath the hazels; as Béranger the spring notes of birds in the woods and gardens sloping down to the Loire. Each poet, of course, regards such enjoyment from a point of view of his own: the Roman under his hot sky, and musing on a philosophy which preached pleasure, but could not escape a tinge of melancholy, seeks shade and repose, and momentary forgetfulness of the imperial city to which he knows that he intends to return. The Parisian's feeling is nearer to the Roman's than to that of their brother the Scot; but he colours even external nature with a tint from the politics of his age; nay, is sometimes unwilling that the birds should sing to any but his favourite idol, the people!\* In the Scot we have a deeper relation to scenery. He is a man of the North, with a vein of the mysticism of the Scandinavian blood; and he goes to nature for sympathy with his sorrow, as well as for a tender oblivion of it, and throws over the landscape the sentiment, whatever it may be, which has possession of his soul. We have said already that Burns is emphatically the rural lyrist of the three, though equally at home with human character, such as other influences contribute to make it. This appears in the love songs, as in all the rest. The heroines of Horace, whenever they appear to have any reality, are dwellers in the capital; damsels of the lute and lyre, whose beauty is the natural ornament of feasts, and of rooms laughing with silver. Those of Béranger (a democrat even in his loves!) are *grisettes*; it is part of their poetry that, however charming the taste of their simple and cheap attire, they shall be of humble belongings and occupation, daughters of the classes whose work is done in towns. We never hear of either batch of them as "coming through the rye," or encountering their lover

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\* Sainte-Beuve, though a friend and admirer of Béranger, has not hesitated to censure this extravagance. *Causeries du Lundi*, 2nd ed., vol. ii. (1852.)

among "the rigs o' barley," or parting with him by the banks of a country stream. Many of the heroines of all these are imaginary, as we have before observed of the Greek statuettes of Horace. There seems to have been an historical *Lisette*,\* though the name is not always consistently used; but Rosette, Margot, Frétilton, Jeanneton, obviously answer to Pyrrha, Myrtales, Lalage, and that ideal sisterhood; and the same may be said of Tibbie Dunbar, Eppie Adair, and other Scotch lasses of homely names, the echoes of which will last long in Ayrshire and Nithsdale, and many a land far enough away from that which holds the singer's grave. Of the drinking songs, we may say, that in all these poets, they exhibit identity of inspiration, with a dissimilarity of details produced by diversity of latitude and climate. Horace calls for the *amphora* of Massican, which has been ripening in the *fumarium* ever since he was born. It is champagne that Béranger summons when he wants to see Margot's eyes sparkle:—

Le verre au main, voyez-la,  
Comme à table elle babille !  
Quel air et quels yeux elle a  
Quand le champagne pétille !

The Northern bard likes wine, too:—

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,  
And fill it in a silver tassie;  
That I may drink before I go  
A service to my bonnie lassie—

he exclaims; and a still better and more passionate effusion begins:—

Yestreen, I had a pint o' wine.

But it is to malt, rather than to the grape, that we owe Burns's best drinking songs, of which none perhaps are more admirable than "Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut." Such a stanza as:—

It is the moon, I ken her horn,  
That's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;  
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame;  
But by my sooth she'll wait a wee!

is the very essence of poetic and bacchanalian fun.

To attempt anything like a Plutarchian *ἀντίκριστος* or comparison of these lyrists, with a view to pronouncing on their relative powers and merit, is a difficult and uninviting task. It is easy to decide that they stand nearer on a level with each other than any song-writer outside the trio stands towards either of them. The songs of Moore, however clever, are artificial—mere strings of epigrams for drawing-rooms. Those of Dibdin are some of them vigorous and natural, but on the whole, they have a factitious character, and one seems to see the Admiralty mark on them,—as if they were served out with other stores. Excellent songs are scattered about our literature, singly or in small groups; but as two or

\* See *Correspondance de Béranger*, I., 423; and *La Lisette de Béranger*, by Thales Bernard. (1864.) The last title reminds us that we have seen a special dissertation called *Conjectures on Tyndaris*!

three epigrams do not make an epigrammatist, so two or three songs do not make a song-writer; and the Three are all fertile. There is a certain right of primogeniture in literature, as elsewhere, and to this Horace is entitled. His culture was far higher than that of the other two. He wrote not songs only, but odes, ranking with the higher grade of the lyrical art; as a moralist and satirist, and author of the "*Ars Poetica*," he has a station of his own among the magnates of letters which demands deference; and he has exercised a great influence over modern Europe. When Thiers said to Béranger, on his death-bed, "Do you know what I call you, Béranger? I call you the Horace of France," the *chansonnier* answered, with admirable readiness and good taste, "But what would the other one say?" He ought not to suffer for his modesty—the honest *chansonnier*, who always seems half ashamed of his great fame; yet it is not unjust to place him below an elder brother. How, then, rank him with the Scot, whose external history his own more resembles, though he was infinitely better appreciated and rewarded by his nation? Here another difficulty comes in—the danger of being warped by national prepossessions; to which one must add the prodigious disadvantage at which every foreigner stands in attempting to grasp all the merit of works like Béranger's, of which he himself says that they are "intimately French." We cannot find that Béranger—who must have read Horace over and over again in translations—owed anything in that kind of way to Burns. He formed himself on his own literature; and we have a right to remember, in measuring him with Burns, that the strong point of that literature was never pure poetry—poetry proper, strictly so called. In what may be defined as the worldly-poetic element—that which we see in our English Popes and Gays, as distinct from the Shakespeares and Shelleys—France is strong. Accordingly, for urban pungency of comic power; for terse, concise, epigrammatic finish of expression, we can desire nothing better than Béranger. His satire dances to his music as charmingly as Puck at one of the balls of the Queen of the Fairies. But this is not all. There is a fine vein of tender sentiment in such songs as "*Qu'elle est jolie!*" "*Les Etoiles qui Filent*," "*La Bonne Vieille*," "*Les Souvenirs du Peuple*," and "*La Vieux Caporal*;" a vein sufficiently proving Béranger to be a poet, as well as a delightful humourist and wit. Burns, however, we cannot but think, reaches a loftier height; and strikes a deeper chord. Béranger is a song-writer in the best sense, but also in the narrowest sense of the word,—as, of course, he well knew himself. He is a song-writer, and nothing more. He has not left behind him a tale like "*Tam o' Shanter*;" a pastoral picture, or religious idyl, of grave and earnest beauty, like "*The Cotter's Saturday Night*." Again, there is,—to borrow an image from the cellar,—more *body* in the humour and tenderness of Burns, than of Béranger. The irony of some of "*Holy Willie's Prayer*;" the mixture of ludicrous delineation, with scornful mirth, in "*The Holy Fair*,"—these pass beyond the sprite-like mockery with which the French-

man taunts the Jesuits. Burns's satire has a dash of Hogarthian poetry, too, as in "Death and Dr. Hornbook," which Béranger's satire does not reach. On the other hand, it would be still vainer to seek in the always pleasant, and sometimes sweet and touching songs of Béranger's graver mood, anything so profoundly heart-moving as the songs of Burns on "Highland Mary." We cannot, indeed, read without a thoughtful melancholy, "La Bonne Vieille," already referred to. He opens with a soft music:—

Vous vieillirez ô ma belle maitresse !  
Vous vieillirez, et je ne serai plus.

And the last stanza sustains the feeling:—

Objet chéri, quand mon renom futile  
De vos vieux ans charmera les douleurs,  
A mon portrait quand votre main débile  
Chaque printemps, suspendra quelques fleurs,  
Levez les yeux vers ce monde invisible,  
Où pour toujours nous nous réunissons ;  
Et bonne vieille, au coin d'un feu paisible,  
De votre ami répétez les chansons.

But,—

Ye banks and braes and streams around  
The castle of Montgomery—

And,—

Thou lingering star with less'ning ray

belong to a different world. Indeed, they are perhaps *too* deeply tender for common singing. They are hymns rather than songs, and would hardly be out of place in churches.

We may remark, in conclusion, that, for the present, the kind of lyrical poetry of which Horace, Burns, and Béranger are the masters, seems to be extinct. We are in a literary winter when there are no singing birds ; though, here and there, a "Theban eagle" may be sailing overhead, but communicating no delight to the multitude, out of sight of whom he wings his way through "the azure depths." The multitude have to fall back on the trash of the hour, which does not connect them by any link with the high literature of the world. Béranger and Burns have been in themselves an education for the poor of France and Scotland,—a consolation in their hard struggles,—a joy in their hours of mirth,—a voice for the feelings to which otherwise they could have given no adequate utterance. The want of living poets of such a class is a kind of national misfortune ; but the best remedy for the want is the diffusion of the books which have been handed down to us from more opulent times.

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## Some Chapters on Talk.

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### XI.—OF PROMOTING TALK.

"LET us get George Barker," said a lady who was arranging the preliminaries of a certain dinner-party within earshot of the writer of these chapters. "He will make a noise."

That a man should be able to establish a claim upon the hospitality of his friends by the possession of a capacity for "making a noise," seems at first sight rather startling; but it will cease to appear so after a little reflection. Noise is favourable to the development of talk; it gives people courage. Many is the sentence, of a facetious, or perhaps still more of a sentimental nature, which has been checked and nipped in the bud, because, at the very moment when the intending speaker has been about to give it utterance, he has found himself deserted, so to speak, by that running accompaniment of other people's voices on which he had counted. Most readers must have observed this phenomenon among the thousand and one vagaries of talk, that it will sometimes cease in one moment and without the slightest warning, a very tempest of voices dropping suddenly, and a dead silence supervening; and this sometimes at the very moment when some unhappy person is in the act of delivering himself of a phrase or sentiment which is not in the least calculated for publicity. As an instance of this, the writer may mention that he was once present when a sudden pause of this kind took place without warning, just when a certain young man was in the act of informing the lady who was seated beside him, that the expression of her countenance indicated a strong musical capacity,—“And yet there is music in your face,” he was saying just at the moment when the accompaniment of voices ceased. The words were uttered by the young gentleman in a loud key, in order that they might be audible to his partner above the general din, and were consequently heard by everybody present, to the extreme confusion of the speaker and of the lady to whom the sentence was addressed.

Now had George Barker been present on this particular occasion, such a misadventure as this just described must certainly have been avoided. The running accompaniment provided by him never leaves off. That this man is a bore of the most direful kind, under ordinary circumstances, there can be no doubt. To be thrown in his way for any length of time—to stay with him in a country-house for instance—is, as will be shown hereafter, a positive affliction. It is at the dinner-table, and there alone, that he is valuable,—valuable, that is, to the giver of the feast. To those who only sit at the feast, and especially to those who sit near him, he perhaps appears

occasionally in the light of a nuisance. That, however, is their affair. Your business as host is to keep the talk going, and you employ this able assistant—just as you do the nimble waiters, who help in another way—to aid you in carrying out your intention. At any cost pauses must be avoided during the progress of your meal, and you know by experience that the presence of this individual is unfavourable to the development of those “flashes of silence,” of which dinner-givers who know their business stand in such wholesome dread.

Of course, in this business of “promoting talk,” the principal responsibility must devolve upon you, who are the giver of the entertainment to which those among whom the talk is to be promoted, are bidden. You have an arduous task to perform, and unless you perform it conscientiously, everything will go wrong. You should, by rights, bear in mind, during the whole of the day of your dinner-party, the remembrance of the work which has to be done. You should breakfast with an eye to it, read the newspaper with an eye to it, lunch—heartily—with an eye to it, and swallow a cup of strongish tea in the course of the afternoon, still with this remembrance of what you have got to do kept carefully before you. What you have got to do is this: to begin with, you have got to talk yourself: “Who rules o’er freemen should himself be free.” He who presides over talkers must himself talk. How you are to do that, how prepare yourself beforehand, how proceed when the moment for action comes, I have attempted to show, in certain succeeding chapters; all that it is necessary to urge now is that the time has come for putting every precept that you have ever mastered into practice. You must talk or nobody else will, and you must begin at once. At the moment when you present your arm to the lady whom you are to take down to dinner, you must have something ready in the way of a remark, for if you go down the stairs in silence, you are lost. There are a hundred slight things which you may say at this time, such as, “It seems to me that the old-fashioned practice of offering a lady your hand to lead her down to dinner was much more courteous and graceful than our modern way of proceeding:” or you may say, “I think I saw you in the Park to-day when I passed through at about six o’clock.” Some trifle of this sort,—it would be intolerably wasteful to use anything of more value at such a time,—will do perfectly. Something must be said at starting, that is the essential. After that you will go on as well as you can. And, besides talking yourself, it must be your constant endeavour to “draw out” to the very utmost the persons by whom you find yourself surrounded. If you see one of your guests sitting silent, either from natural diffidence, or because he has fallen among strangers, or owing to any other cause, it is your duty to look after him immediately, addressing your conversation to him, or in some other way giving him a chance of emerging from his present state of eclipse. A man owes something of attention, and of protection, to every person whom he asks to his table, and it devolves on him unquestionably, if he sees one of his guests unlawfully put upon, or ill-used by a fellow-guest, or reduced to silence by

another's loudness, and disabled thereby from doing himself any sort of conversational justice, to interpose and come to the rescue without delay. There is no doubt that much may be done in this and in other ways by a dexterous host towards making the party at which he presides a successful one. Sydney Smith—by all accounts a great master in our art—seems to have excelled in this way. "There is one talent," he says himself, "I think I have to a remarkable degree; there are substances in nature called amalgams, whose property is to combine incongruous materials; now I am a moral amalgam, and have a peculiar talent for mixing up human materials in society, however repellent their natures." "And certainly," adds his biographer, "I have seen a party, composed of materials as ill-assorted as the individuals of the happy family in Trafalgar Square, drawn out and attracted together by the charm of his manner, till at last you would have believed they had been born for each other." And these functions, which devolve upon the giver of an entertainment, need to be performed with the utmost tact and delicacy. It is very easy to make some fatal mistake in a matter of this kind. If when you see, as described above, a diffident man sitting speechless at table, you make a sudden assault, even of the most friendly kind, upon him, rallying him upon his silence, or urging him to relate some experience which he has recently passed through, or to tell some story for which he is celebrated—if you deal thus riotously with him, I say, it is ten to one that you will simply frighten him out of his wits, and make him more reserved than he was before. Neither is it always a successful proceeding to do, as some fervent but mistaken promoters do—attempt to interest two stranger guests in each other's proceedings by means of a sort of disguised introduction. "Mr. Giles has just been travelling in your part of the country, Mrs. Tollemache," says Amphitryon, bending across; and then he adds,— "Mrs. Tollemache is a Cornish lady, Giles." It is very seldom that such a speech as this leads to any good: the dialogue which ensues between Mr. Giles and his neighbour under these circumstances being generally forced and spasmodic, and quickly coming to an end. Sometimes the attempt to render Mr. Giles interesting is of another kind. "Mr. Giles,"—it is the hostess who speaks this time—"Mr. Giles has just been staying with Victor Hugo in Jersey, and we are all dying to hear about it." It is astonishing to see how swiftly and how completely the person thus addressed will shut up and retire within himself under the influence of such an attack. You have as much chance of drawing out a man of this sort, by such a course of proceeding, as you would of catching a horse, in a field, by throwing a sieve-full of corn in his face. Mr. Giles is not to be seduced into describing the particulars of his stay with the great man by such shallow artifices as these.

The fact is that promoting talk, like talking itself, is an art requiring to be practised with delicacy and refinement; and your efforts, as the giver of an entertainment, to draw out your guests, must, above and beyond all things, be always most carefully disguised. There must be the

art to conceal the art, or no good will be done. What you would do in this way effectually you must do indirectly and covertly. If you want Mr. Giles to discourse with his neighbour on Cornish subjects, or to describe his visit to Victor Hugo, you will do well to address some other person at table upon one of these subjects, and not your friend himself. "Sad mining accident that, Rackstraw," you will say, "reported in to-day's paper; and all owing, as it seems, to the extraordinary carelessness of the men." "It is inconceivable," replies Mr. Rackstraw, "the indifference to danger which results from familiarity with it." "Inconceivable," you repeat. "Why, I am told that, at this very moment, there is a mine in Cornwall" (loud) "where, in one of the galleries, there is a hole communicating with the sea, and it is simply stopped with a bung. I have it on the authority of an eyewitness. Fancy keeping out the Atlantic with a cork. Yes, I forget the exact name of the place, but it's somewhere in Cornwall" (loud) "I know." Now this is the way to bring your friend and his neighbour together on Cornwall. Once let the difficult Giles find the subject brought before him in this sort of way, and he will infallibly join in the conversation; will then, as infallibly, *find out for himself* that the lady next him is well up in Cornish life, and all will go naturally and well. The only thing which you have to avoid is the addressing him openly upon the subject on which you desire that his eloquence shall be exercised.

And now, if the reader will allow it, there should be a few words said concerning certain smaller ways of promoting talk, which, though apparently not of much consequence in themselves, are yet decidedly calculated to forward our great object. Champagne promotes talk, acting in a moment, almost like a charm, inasmuch that the observer will frequently note that in a company, previously disposed to silence, that buzz which is so dear to entertainers will begin to be heard in but a few minutes after this friendly liquor has begun to circulate. It developes ideas and gives courage—both valuable qualities for would-be talkers. Its effect is only temporary, it is true, but a temporary outburst is something, and besides, the dose can be repeated. Are there not more bottles beneath the sideboard? Eccentric objects about the table, again, are valuable as promoters. I once knew a fan which did great service in this way. The figures which were painted upon it were intended to tell a story, but what the story was nobody could exactly make out. Everybody had a different view of it and a new explanation. Each new suggestion gave rise to an argument, in the course of which many brilliant things were sure to be said, first on one side and then on another. "The lover has deserted her, she is crying bitterly, and the mother is expostulating," says one. "Mother!" cries another. "There is no mother in the case. They are both mere girls, and this young rascal in the pigtail has forsaken one of them, and has taken up with her rival, who, by the way, seems very glad to get him." From a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes would sometimes be got through by means of discussions of this

sort in connection with this particular fan, and will any one say that the owner of such an instrument as this is not a benefactor to society?

And there are other engines for squeezing talk out of a company of dry and sterile guests beside ladies' fans. I have known a pair of ingenious, but inefficacious, nut-crackers, made by the village carpenter, to promote talk among persons staying together in the country, and who had travelled over each other's minds to a considerable extent. I have seen great things done by means of a set of Apostle spoons, or a collection of dessert-plates, each one with a different design on its surface. Much may be accomplished with the aid of such inanimate accessories. Not many days since it was my fortune to make one at a table where the conversation, which had been doing very well, but was just beginning to flag, was entirely renovated by some newly imported French crackers, which we pulled at dessert, and in the inside of each of which was a pattern of some article of dress, with trimmings and all other appurtenances complete. Little models of bonnets, aprons, neck-collars, and the like articles of millinery were among these, all made in coloured tissue-papers, and packed up tightly within the ornamental cracker-paper. As each of these minute garments was exhibited in turn, there were, of course, roars of laughter, and this, and the remarkable subsequent effect of the device upon the conversational powers of all present, were so striking that I was unable to resist the conviction that these crackers must decidedly be considered in the light of promoters, and should be mentioned in this chapter accordingly.

It is a hopeful circumstance, and one which shows that general attention is more closely directed to the promoting of talk than one would suppose, that suggestions are made from time to time to the writer of these chapters from persons who are evidently much interested in our present studies. As an instance of this I may mention that only a few days since it was hinted to me by a very efficient talk-student, and in connection with this particular section of my subject, that it would be well if it were the custom on occasions of ceremony to place by the plate of each guest a sort of programme of the kind of conversation with which he or she should entertain his or her neighbour. "Captain Jones is a great traveller. He has crossed the American continent from Canada to British Columbia;" or "Professor Bumps is strong on moral philosophy and ethnology; if you get him on either of these subjects, you cannot fail to extract much useful information." Or the statement might be of a different kind, and might relate to a lady, instead of a gentleman:—"Mrs. Dashwood Smith drives the handsomest pair of ponies in London. She is much interested in horses, she hunts, and will not be sorry to hear the latest intelligence from the Corner." Or yet another type might be described:—"Miss Strong has written a work on the fitness of woman to exercise the elective franchise. She can tell you how many loaves of bread an acre of wheat represents. She knows exactly what it is that the Fenians want, and can see her way to a satisfactory solution of the Roman

question. She knows nothing of balls, operas, plays, flower-shows, and such like trifles, and is not at all desirous of obtaining information upon matters of that frivolous kind." And such an arrangement as this might serve, besides promoting talk, to render our social intercourse more secure, and keep us from getting into many of those small scrapes into which we sometimes fall from not being acquainted with the nationality, the religion, or the family connections of some stranger into whose company we are thrown suddenly. What an advantage it would be, for instance, to find in the sealed envelope beside your plate such information as this concerning the person sitting next you:—"Mr. A. is a Roman Catholic, and strong on the wrongs of Ireland;" or, "Mr. B. is a member of the Jewish religion. He is related to the C.'s and the D.'s, and, by marriage, to the E.'s. He has written several books, and among them the much-abused work, *Diapason Stopford*; or, *The Genius of Music*.

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## XII.—HOW TO TALK.

WE must by no means lose sight of the object which we set before ourselves when we commenced these studies. What was then proposed was, to find out, if possible, some principle or system, by acting upon which such of us as are conscious of our own conversational deficiencies might learn, as far as possible, to supply them. With this end in view we have examined briefly, but, it is to be hoped, at sufficient length for our present purpose, the practice of those persons who are generally regarded as successful talkers, and have also bestowed such an amount of attention as was necessary upon those less gifted individuals with whom silence is to a great extent habitual. It is my firm belief that the subject which we have under discussion is an extremely important one, and deserving of much and grave consideration. And let no one say that this is speaking in an exaggerated tone. Everything in this world is comparative. When, for instance, it is said of young Captain Billings and the Honourable Amelia Coosey, who are just going to start together on the matrimonial journey, that they will be terribly poor, though it is certain that their means will provide them with food, and shelter, and clothes to keep them warm, yet is that phrase, "terribly poor," when applied to this young couple, not really an exaggerated form of words. What is meant is simply that they will be terribly poor considering their position, as, on an income of four hundred a year, they undoubtedly will be. It is exactly in the same way that we may speak of this subject which we have at present under consideration as being of "great importance." If we were in a state of nature, a set of savage settlers upon the shore of some uninhabited land, there is no doubt that the possession of any greater amount of conversational capacity than that which would enable us to express our wants to each other would not be of great importance; but as we are nothing of the kind, but, on the contrary, inhabitants of a country in a high state of

civilization, the situation is different; and the necessity under which we find ourselves of being able to make fluent talk on all sorts of occasions is pressing enough to justify us in speaking of the art of making such talk, as an art which it is of great importance that we should cultivate and bring to perfection.

It is surely impossible for any one giving this subject of ours due consideration to fail of having a high respect and admiration for the character of a good talker. Really to excel in this way, a man needs to be possessed of so many fine and valuable qualities. He must be well endowed with natural gifts: he must be morally courageous; he must have a retentive and accurate memory, some amount of imagination, or at least of fancy, and an active intellect. Nor must he be behindhand in acquired qualities. He must be well educated. How many things ought he to know; on how many subjects is it necessary that he should possess at least a fair average amount of information? There are the classics to begin with. A man who is to be ready to talk at all times, and in all societies, must certainly have attained to some amount of classical knowledge. When the precise meaning of a certain well-known passage in one of Horace's odes, or one of the satirical pieces of Catullus, is being discussed among a party of men, it is necessary that anybody who has pretensions to be called a talker should be able to put in his word, and give some indication that he knows the passage under discussion, and is at least acquainted with the meaning ordinarily assigned to it. Then, in history, and universal biography, he must be thoroughly well up; and this, not only as to their highways, but pre-eminently also as to their byways. He must know, for instance, not only what were the battles engaged in by a great general such as Marlborough, but also on what terms that hero lived with his illustrious consort, and how Duchess Sarah sometimes plagued him sorely; or, if Jonathan Swift's name should come upon the carpet, it is necessary that the talker who is to be described as "good," should have something to say, not only about the dean's influence upon the literature of his time and country, but as to his treatment of his female admirers, Stella, Varina, and Vanessa. For it is a curious thing, but true nevertheless, that numerous as are the subjects of interest connected with our own day which we have got to talk about, it yet sometimes, and in some societies, happens that the conversation will go back to such "old-world" stories as these, and that even the authorship of Junius will get to be discussed across a modern dinner-table. Nor is an acquaintance with matters of this sort by any means all that is necessary. A good talker must be very well up in art-knowledge, using the term in its widest sense. He must know the outlines of the history and chronology of painting, must be able to say something about the influence of Perugino upon his pupil Raphael, something of the relative merits of Claude Lorraine and Turner. And of music, again, he must not—especially in these days—be even moderately ignorant. You will find this subject discussed, and elaborately discussed, too, now-a-days, in most societies.

We have all of us assisted on many occasions when the talk has been of Mozart and Bach, or Gounod and Wagner, the music of the past, or the music of the future, and when we have had to walk warily, and think twice before enunciating an opinion, lest we should incur the contempt of the knowing ones. Has it not frequently happened to the reader to find himself one of a company in which a subject of this sort has been started? The great Cymballini, or some other equally eminent composer, is known to have written a new opera, which has never been performed in this country, but about which public curiosity is much excited; and this piece of work becomes a subject of discussion. From various parts of the table, contributions to the fund of information which is at the disposal of the company are poured in. "I saw a man yesterday," says a distinguished amateur, "who was with Cymballini the other day, in Paris, and to whom the composer played certain passages from the new opera. My friend says that it is divine, and contains some of Cymballini's very best work." This brings out, of course, an expression of opinion from another amateur, in direct contradiction to this view of the matter. This last has heard that the thing is "very poor throughout, and is, above all, a mass of plagiarisms." Then a gentleman well up in the history of music takes the opportunity of putting in his contribution. "There was," he remarks, in a good loud voice, "an opera written on the same subject—as you, Mrs. Jingle, will doubtless remember—by Bellini; but I think it has seldom, if ever, been performed in this country." The lady referred to replies that "she heard it once at Milan." Is there not, by the way, always somebody present, in all societies, who has assisted at a performance of an opera which no one else has heard, and always at Milan? "She heard it once at Milan," she says: "thought the music poor; but then it was so divinely sung,—Persiani, then in her best time, taking the principal part." Such talk as this is very common. It is so common, indeed, that any man who frequents society will find it very well worth his while to "get up" music, as a subject, sufficiently to be able to join in such discussions. It is compromising to the reputation of a professed talker to allow even one single subject of importance to be discussed by a company of which he forms one without his contributing something to the talk.

A conversation of the sort here described will sometimes, out of deference to some foreigner who happens to be present, be carried on in the French language; and the mention of this circumstance brings us to the consideration of another important qualification which a good talker should certainly possess. He should be a linguist. He should have a tolerable knowledge of the German and Italian languages, and should be a glib French scholar as well. How, otherwise, will he feel on an occasion when, for the reason just given, the French idiom is employed by the company as the medium of inter-communication? How will he feel when the good story is told, the point of which—if not the whole story—is given in Italian? He will make desperate efforts to

appear to understand. He will watch those more fortunate persons present who do understand, in order to take his cue from them. When he sees them laugh he will laugh too, but in a shabby and underhand way which takes nobody in. It is a grave question whether it is ever possible to take any one in in this way; whether any man can make others believe that he is enjoying a joke when he does not see it, or that he understands a story when he has not the least idea what it is about. The writer of these words has seen this thing tried frequently, and has even himself attempted it on more than one occasion, but has never known such unworthy strivings to be attended with any measure of success. Few of us are unacquainted with that story in which the Italian guide plays such an important part, and the whole point of which turns upon that individual's facetious reply to a remark of his patron's: "'Corpo di Bacco!' the fellow exclaimed," says the story-teller, and then the fun follows.

The number of subjects on which a talker must be well informed, if he hopes to rise to any distinction in his profession, is undoubtedly very great. Nothing has as yet been said about politics; yet in these it is necessary that he should be thoroughly well up, or what becomes of him in certain circles when the ladies leave the dining-room, and the inevitable pompous talk begins? And the discussion of political topics, and, indeed, of others which come under the general denomination of news of the day, is in these days a much more difficult thing than it used to be in the good old period, when a man might talk *Times*, and yet get listened to and believed in. People will not have *The Times* at second-hand now; and a statement prefaced with the established old formula, "I see by the evening paper," stands little chance of being favourably received. To get listened to in the present day, you must have something to say which you have got from some private source. Your "political intelligence" must have reached you from somebody so high in office that you only mention him as "the person who knows more of the intentions of the Government than any other man in England." Your Royal Family anecdote must have come from Gold Hearth-broom, or Silver Tongs, or some other officer in equally high position about the Court. If you have some startling information to give about the Suez Canal, or the Mont Cenis Tunnel, it must be through Piston, C.E., that you received it; while, if you have anything to say about the Abyssinian expedition, it must be something which you heard at the War Office "this very afternoon."

And besides all this knowledge of politics and history, both ancient and modern, of living languages and dead classics, of art and science, a man, to be a thoroughly useful and reliable talker, should know at least a little about a great many other, and perhaps smaller, matters, which he may, under certain circumstances, be called upon to deal with conversationally. We have been chiefly occupied with what it behoves a man to know in order that he may acquit himself creditably as what may be called a metropolitan talker; but this is not enough. He must be a

proficient in country talk, as well as town talk. He must be able to treat of horses and dogs, of game and partridges, and to discuss the relative merits of breech-loaders and muzzle-loaders; and when the inevitable after-dinner stories of the eccentric neighbouring squire, and what he said to the Duke of B. when that nobleman shot the squire's favourite pointer, or what, on the other hand, the Duke said when he was put in a corner of the plantation which did not suit him—when stories of this type begin to circulate, then must our talker also be ready with *his* anecdote of an appropriate kind. He should have, moreover, a good knowledge of Swedes, and at least a smattering upon the subject of mangold-wurzel; should know the price of land, by the acre, in the different counties of England; and the relative value of labour in Dorsetshire and Northumberland.

I am giving but a mere outline of what it is requisite for a man to know who intends to be a talker. To give a complete list of all the branches of knowledge in which he ought to be well and thoroughly grounded would occupy an amount of space in these pages which I should not have the courage to ask for. Truly it is an arduous career to enter on, this of a talker. How many things a man must do, how many places he must go to, how much he must undergo, in order to talk well! Are we not all—even such of us as have not the ambition of reaching any very high distinction in this way—are we not all influenced, in many of our proceedings, by this desire to have something to talk about? Do we not often act contrary to our strongest inclinations with this object? There are books which everybody is reading, and which, though they fail to interest us, we read also, in order that we may be able to join in the conversation, when the books in question are under discussion. There are plays which we don't want to see, operas which we don't want to hear, parties which we don't want to go to, exhibitions of various kinds which we don't want to attend, concerts which weary us, and lectures which bore us—at all of which we assist in order that, when the inevitable question, "Have you seen such a picture?" or, "Have you heard such an opera?" is put to us, we may be able to launch forth into criticism on the picture or opera in question, and give an opinion on the relative merits of each. I have no doubt as to the large influence of this motive on a considerable section of man and woman kind. Do we not often see at a concert—when the fierce amateur with spectacles is following every note of some favourite composition in the music-book, and drinking it in with joy—do we not see many persons present, whose wandering looks and impatient gestures, prove that this musical treat is hardly a treat to them, and whose every glance and every action give one the impression that, upon the whole, they would prefer, at that moment, being anywhere else in this habitable world than at the Hanover Square Rooms? And again, when some ponderous volume, treating perhaps of some equally ponderous subject, is being "much talked about," do we not often see an unfortunate victim spending hour after hour of the day in company with this big book,

in order that he or she may have something to say concerning it : carrying it about from place to place, trying it now on the sofa in the drawing-room, now in the leather chair in the library, and again under the trees in the garden, but always ready to lay it down on the smallest provocation—a child entering the room with a demand for pencil and paper, or a robin darting about among the cedars on the lawn ?

Every science has its martyrs, and such persons as those above alluded to are the martyrs to this one of ours. Martyrs they are unquestionably, since they endure tortures for the sake of their cause. We have already taken note of the sonata penalty, and observed how acute is the distress which it inflicts upon some persons born with certain deficiencies of ear and taste. Yet this, or the evening-party infliction,—sometimes a very severe torment indeed, the victim being exposed to a most extreme and insupportable degree of heat, and at the same time subjected to a very acute and painful amount of pressure, resembling the *peine forte et dure* of former times,—these sufferings, and many more which it is not necessary to enlarge upon here, the faithful will sustain cheerfully, with the sole object before them of accumulating matter on which it will be possible for them to exercise their talking powers when the proper time comes.

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### XIII.—THE SAME.

In most of those Manuals of Instruction, Guides, and Hand-books, which are published from time to time with the ostensible object of teaching men and women how to practise some art or handicraft in which they desire to excel, the student is bidden to watch carefully the proceedings of some eminent professor of the said art or handicraft, and to imitate the same as closely as may be. This counsel is indeed common to all such books, whether the art whose principles they teach be that of throwing a fly, or handling a cue, or painting a landscape from nature. “You will learn more,” say the compilers of these treatises, “by observing the proceedings of an able and practised performer for half an hour, than by theorizing for a week on end.” Truths arrived at by universal consent are much to be respected. Who is the writer of these chapters that he should set himself up against other compilers of hand-books ? He does not attempt to do so. Let him, then, also recommend this practice which is held in such high esteem by teachers of all kinds, to the diligent talk-student, and beg him, when he meets with a great talker, to observe him with a watchful and discriminating eye, noting his manners and customs, with the view of arriving at the principles of action on which they are based. The manners, by the way, of a great talker are not always of the politest. He is commonly overhearing, and not unfrequently even rude. He is apt to interrupt and cut short other conversationalists ; and declines, for the most part, to hear what they have got to say. Leaving, then, the manners of the great talker out of the question, and getting on to his

customs, which will be more profitable as a matter of study, we shall find :—

1. That it is his custom to guard very carefully against waste.

Any man who aspires to be a good talker must be, above all things, careful and discreet in this particular. He must never, as we have seen in a previous chapter, spoil a promising subject by introducing it at a time when it will not get listened to, or waste a good thing upon a person who is unworthy to receive it. He must not, for instance, throw away a new story, or, indeed, any statement or piece of description which happens to be new, upon some unimportant member of the company in which he finds himself—some poor relation or obscure guest. For such persons any ancient wares which the talker happens to have by him—soiled articles or damaged goods of last season—will do perfectly well, and it would be folly and waste to set before them the novelties which are wanted for their betters. To produce a conversational tit-bit, again, of a really relishable quality, at a wrong moment, would be an unpardonable act of extravagance and wastefulness. No man in his senses, for instance, would think of saying a good thing, or entering upon a promising narration, in the drawing-room before dinner. A talker who knows what he is about will remember how much more valuable the tit-bit in question will be later in the evening, and will, with that self-control which must always characterize him, check himself in time. He must have a care, though, that the anecdote, statement, or whatever else it may be, which he thus defers publishing, does not escape his memory altogether. Examples of this sort of forgetfulness might easily be quoted. They are by no means uncommon.

Continuing our observation of the customs of a professed talker, we shall observe :—

2. That he commonly speaks in a loud tone of voice, and rarely or never addresses the person who happens to sit next him.

This particular characteristic of the "subject of our remarks" is a very special one indeed. Truth to say, it seems on reflection as if this power of talking across a table was *the* distinguishing mark of the real talker. The man who merely earwigs his partner can hardly be said to deserve this proud title. He only keeps up a muttered conversation with the person next him—a comparatively easy achievement, of small value from a social point of view. He is just better than the confirmed taciturn, who remains utterly speechless, and that is all. It would be sacrilege to mention him in the same breath with the great creature who, addressing some individual seated at a distance of at least fifteen feet in a diagonal line, says, "By-the-by, Silvertongue, there was rather a curious thing happened after you went out of court to-day;" or, "Did you hear, Mrs. Jones, of the extraordinary behaviour of your little *protégée* at the concert at Dudley House?"

Speech of this sort, delivered in a key sufficiently loud to be audible above the clatter, which accompanies the serving of dinner even in the

best regulated households, marks the truly great master whose performances are really worth studying. Of course, the beginner cannot expect to be able at once to emulate the achievements of this professor, and to execute this difficult diagonal business at a first trial. Still, he should always bear in mind that this is what he has got to aim at—that this is what he must come to at last—and that he can never hope to be looked upon in the light of a successful talker, till he is able to hold his own in a conversation in which all sorts of distant, as well as near, contributors take part.

Proceeding methodically with our observations, we find :—

3. That the habitual and practised talker does not skip rapidly from subject to subject, but exhausts each one thoroughly before he goes to another.

Of all the precepts which the conversational *aspirant* should “grapple to his soul with hooks of steel,” this one, that he must not abandon a subject once started till it is utterly and entirely used up, is, I think, the most important. It lies at the root of all success in talking. By adhering to this principle, a man of very moderate natural gifts will go further, in the long run, than a much more richly endowed personage who is not in the habit of abiding by this golden rule. An inefficient and incapable talker is always discursive, and darts from one subject to another, as if the supply at his disposal was unlimited. He deals with his subjects, indeed, as an indiscreet concocter of lemonade does with the lemons with which he operates, giving one after another a hasty squeeze and then throwing them away, instead of completely exhausting each lemon with fierce hand-pressure, and then putting it into a lemon-squeezer to extract the uttermost drops. The discreet talker acts thus with his conversational lemons. Drop by drop he causes the garrulous juice to exude, and then, as it becomes necessary, subjects each of them to such an extreme high pressure as will bring out any remaining virtue which may still be capable of elimination. The importance of proceeding upon this principle cannot possibly be overrated. The exhaustive system is the only one on which the slightest reliance can be placed, as those who try to act upon any other will find to their cost.

Let us try to make this matter more clear by an example. Suppose that you, a diligent cultivator of the art of talking, go out to dinner on St. Swithin's day, which, as the festival occurs in the middle of the London season, is a likely enough thing to happen : of course you will ask your next neighbour if she believes in the popular superstition connected with the day, and equally of course, in these enlightened days, she will reply that she does not. Now here comes an opportunity for the exercise of that conversational perseverance of which such favourable mention has just been made. The imperfectly instructed talker would very likely abandon St. Swithin at this point, and go off to something else—the opera, the horticultural fête, or what not. But you who are better taught will not act in this improvident fashion. You will, to begin with, cleave

with desperate tenacity to the rudimentary parts of your subject. You will adhere, as long as the thing is possible, to the saint himself; you will speculate as to who St. Swithin was, or how the superstition belonging to the day can have originated. You will remark that most likely there was some amount of practical foundation for it,—that persons who were in the habit of watching the weather had observed that it very often rained about the middle of July, and that, when it did rain at that time, there was ordinarily a long continuance of bad weather. Some practical consideration of this sort, you will say, was generally to be found at the root of most of these queer fancies. The origin of the superstition thus disposed of, you will naturally turn from St. Swithin's days in general to this present St. Swithin's day in particular, and initiate a discussion on the weather. Had it rained in the course of the day? Surely not. "Yes," replies your neighbour, "there were a few drops in the morning." You express surprise. You had not observed anything of the kind. You suppose then that "we are in for it, for forty days. Six weeks' rain, what will people do?" It might be imagined now by uninitiated persons that here was an end of the business; but it is not so. St. Swithin is, after all, only a part of your subject, which is in reality superstition in the abstract. So when the saint himself is squeezed dry—no pun is intended—you can go off to other superstitions, and discuss them, one by one, at your leisure. You can ask your companion whether she really believes that Friday is an unlucky day, and whether she objects to being one of thirteen at table. More speculations follow concerning these superstitions, which with careful management prove to be as suggestive as St. Swithin himself, so that this one subject and its natural ramifications will serve to keep you afloat from the time of sitting down to soup, till the moment when the game, or rather, as there is no game in season on St. Swithin's day, till the inevitable ducks and green peas begin to circulate.

Or suppose that our model talker is in his place at the dinner-table on the occasion of another important anniversary, occurring at a time of year far removed from the period of the St. Swithin festival,—suppose that he is dining out on Guy Fawkes day, what use will he make then of his opportunities? He will begin, probably, with a piece of description. He has had occasion to go into the City that morning, and in one of the by-streets through which his road lay, he came suddenly upon a great stuffed figure with a black face and hideous goggle-eyes, and in all respects very unlike the usual guy. The name of "Theodore" was written on a banner carried in front of this monster. "Curious, wasn't it?" says our adept; and then he goes on to give his opinion that the time is coming when this anniversary will be habitually taken advantage of by the public as an opportunity of gibbeting any particular individual who happens to be unpopular at the moment, and when the original legend belonging to the day will be entirely lost sight of. After this, he will of course proceed to remark how wonderful it is that the story has been remembered so long as it has, and to speculate on the reasons which have kept its memory

alive. The name, he thinks, has something to do with it,—much, in fact: it is short, easily remembered, pronounced without difficulty. If it had been a Gualterio della Mirandola, or a Hildebrand von Klingenspoehr, who had placed those barrels of gunpowder under the Parliament Houses, he would, in either case, have been forgotten long ago. Guy Fawkes, on the other hand, seems a name specially adapted to the British larynx, just as the figure ordinarily associated with the name is suited to British notions of what is funny. And here our talker will probably become facetious, and give a comic description of the real original old-fashioned guy, with the helpless legs and the feet always turned the wrong way, with the bundle of matches, and the time-honoured lantern. These pleasantries, if our professor is fortunate enough to have by him a neighbour who is both unsophisticated and easily amused, will serve to while away much time, and to defer the moment when it shall become necessary to move on—not, indeed, to a new subject—but to a new section of the old one: such as the tendency of mankind to express its feelings by contriving artificial representations or effigies of those persons for whom it may have conceived a hatred or an admiration, burning or hanging the first with circumstances of ignominy, and distinguishing the last with a pretence of honourable burial and funeral processions.

It would be to some such variations as this that the discreet talker would diverge at last from his original or Guy Fawkes theme, keeping close to it still, however, discoursing on the favour with which the name of Guy seems to be regarded by the novelists of our day, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of a *chaise-à-porteurs* as a means of conveyance, and only at an advanced period of the entertainment getting so far from the subject first introduced, as to touch lightly on fireworks and bonfires generally. By this time it will, perhaps, be as well to have something else ready. And that something else, let me add, is pretty sure to turn up; for a good beginning has been made, the talk is fairly set going, and the winning game is always an easy one to play.

And now let us consider for a moment the reverse case—the case of that misguided and ill-advised talker who neglects this precious and economical system of subject-squeezing, and who treats the different topics at his disposal, as the Government officials do their quill pens, using them once only, and then throwing them aside as worthless. This talker, whose example is here held up as a warning to the sagacious, will—to return to our first example—begin his conversation on the 15th of July, just as our other and more skilful practitioner did, with the St. Swithin's legend,—but with what different result! As soon as he has made the discovery that his neighbour is incredulous concerning the popular superstition, instead of seeing in this very condition of her mind an opening of prodigious value for starting an argument, or offering an explanation, he merely finds discouragement in this expression of incredulity, foolishly drops the subject, allows a pause of some minutes to occur, and then begins afresh by asking the unfortunate being beside him, “If she rides in the Park?” Nor does

even the utterance of this most wretched formula in reality serve his turn. Although he is answered this time in the affirmative, such reply is apparently just as disconcerting to him as the negative which met his previous St. Swithin question. From riding in the Park to riding in general, and thence to a selection of anecdotes of that noble animal the horse, one would imagine would be a natural transition; nay, a man who knew his business would be able to bring the talk from such a starting-point as this to other kinds of riding, such as dromedary-riding, or elephant-riding. But our conversational spendthrift attempts nothing of the sort. Riding in the Park suggests nothing to him, but the fact that he had found this pastime a very hot one on that particular morning, a circumstance which he hastens to communicate to his partner: "Very hot there this morning," he says, and then this theme is abandoned like the last; and "Did you go to the Paris Exhibition?" or some other question of the same worth, follows in another detached and spasmodic burst.

There is no mistake with which I am acquainted so entirely and finally ruinous to any one who aspires to become even a moderately successful talker, as this one of dancing off from one subject to another. It is *the* great danger against which I would caution the talk-student. It is the rock ahead on which a light should burn by night, and on which a bell should sound by day, to warn the conversational mariner off.

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#### XIV.—THE SAME.

KEEPING still to our observation of the habits of a first-class talker, we shall note,—

4. That he will, to some extent, prepare his talk beforehand.

Those persons who live temporarily, or permanently, in the same house with a professed talker will remark that there are seasons when he will, for a short time—under pretext of writing letters, or engaging in some other necessary occupation—deny himself the company of his fellow-men, and seek a temporary retirement. Depend upon it, when our conversationalist thus secludes himself, he is engaged in drawing up the *menu* of his table-talk. Of course he does not do this in an elaborate or formal manner. Sydney Smith once drew up a conversation-programme, of the fullest kind, for some young friends of his who complained to him that they did not know what to say to their partners when engaged in quadrille-dancing. Our adept does not go so far as this. He merely makes a few mental notes of subjects suited to the time and place. "The rector is coming to dinner to-day," he says to himself, as he prowls about the village, outside his friend's park-gates. "Let's have a look at the church. Yes; I see. Main part of the building early English: west window later, perpendicular. What's this?—a doorway stopped up! cavity in the wall close by—looks like a receptacle for holy-water. Holy-water *out-side* the church is uncommon, surely; that'll do. Here's a curious old monument,

too. Family on their knees—descending scale. Father and mother, grown-up and growing-up children of different sizes, down to small boy and girl at the back. Inscription illegible—ask about it." Sometimes our diligent friend gets other people to assist him in making his preparations, they being all the time profoundly ignorant of what he is at. "Sir John Duckfield coming here to-day, ain't he?" he inquires of his host. "Norfolk man is he? what part of the county?" He is informed that Sir John's estates are near the "Broads" on the east coast. "Oh, yes, I've heard," he goes on. "Great place for wild-fowl, isn't it? Wild-fowl and decoys, and snipe-shooting—that sort of thing?" Such questions as these he will put quite carelessly, but rely on it, they are not asked without intention. The wild-ducks and the decoys will be heard of again at dinner-time when the Norfolk squire arrives, and perhaps our friend will, in the meantime, just drop into the library for half-an-hour, and have a look at Bewick. He visits that particular apartment, by the way, not unfrequently. Allusions to past events are eminently successful on certain occasions, and is not the *Annual Register* one of those books which no gentleman's library should be without? Here, too, the more modern volumes from Mudie's are garnered up, and the Reviews. A man must know something of the literature of the day if he expects to acquit himself creditably in the talking way.

And if this kind of preparation is necessary for a professed talker, such as this one just quoted, how much more is it indispensable to the inexperienced and unready beginner? Let the neophyte, then, by all means, as occasion serves, get himself up beforehand for his conversational duties. His preparation need not, after all, be very elaborate. Sometimes, if he is pushed for time, a rapid mental act, which can even be engaged in while he is dressing for dinner, will do. What is uppermost in people's thoughts just now? he will say to himself, as he ties his cravat. And then he runs over in his mind the different events, public and private, with which the world—or, at least, that section of it to which he belongs—is at that moment occupied. And so he manages to secure two or three subjects which will do to fall back upon in case of emergency, which is, after all, the essential. Very likely, if the conversation breaks well for him, he will not want them. Still it is better that he should have this reserve fund by him, if only because it gives him confidence,—the quality, of all others, which a talker most requires. It is possible that, in the course of time, he will be able to dispense with this system of preparation, which is most desirable, the preparing conversation beforehand being a somewhat ignoble act, which I only venture to inculcate *sub rosa*.

There is no doubt, also, that it is possible to carry this system of preparing beforehand for possible conversational emergencies too far. There was once a very worthy gentleman, known to the writer of these chapters, who always took care to have something by him ready to let off on occasions of chance meeting in the street; so that when he ran against you suddenly in Piccadilly he would begin—almost before the first greetings were exchanged

—"There is a report printed in the last number of the *Edinburgh* which gives the whole of the figures of the Registrar's returns for a period of four years from last March, and which is highly interesting;" or he would ask you in the middle of Bond Street "if you were acquainted with the theory just issued by Professor Startler, that everything in the world—'everything, the very stick I carry in my hand'—is made up of infinitesimal atoms, all invisible, and all perpetually in motion?" Nay, so far did this good gentleman carry his system of preparing beforehand for these chance meetings, that he even kept by him little speeches adapted to special individuals of his acquaintance, and to no others: a complimentary word or two about his picture at the Royal Academy, for his friend the artist; a question on a knotty point in a law case just then creating considerable sensation, for the barrister; or a criticism on his last lecture at the Royal Institution, for the professor. No doubt it is a grievous business when two people, each in a preoccupied state, meet one another in the street, and, having shaken hands, find that they have nothing whatever to say, and remain entirely speechless; or worse, say things better left unsaid, one of the pair so meeting, in pure awkwardness and embarrassment, uttering some statement which should not on any account be made, blurring out some secret, or making some allusion which is very painful to the person he is addressing, and which, in a collected moment, he would rather cut out his tongue than give utterance to; while as to the nonsense which those sudden meetings occasionally lead men to talk—"What, are you in town?" or, "Aren't you gone to Paris yet?"—we are all acquainted with it to our cost. Still, melancholy as are such catastrophes, I yet hold that the precautions taken by my friend, to secure himself against mischances of this sort, were excessive in degree, and not to be generally recommended; and more especially would I caution the reader against that practice of preparing beforehand speeches which are of only individual application, as it is very easy in such cases to make some great mistake, and, in a confused moment, to congratulate (as my friend once did) the barrister on the success of his picture, and the artist on the great profundity of his legal attainments.

But setting aside the use of such excessive precautions against a conversational break-down as those which we have last considered, there is no doubt that a certain amount of preparation for what is coming is good for those who feel themselves to be only moderately gifted for the encounter which takes place night after night on our social battlefield. Yes, it is good to be a little primed beforehand. See how the public speaker primes himself beforehand, spending the morning in mastering the statistics of the charity, whose claims he is to press in the evening, or prowling about for hours among the pictures on the Academy walls, on the day of the annual dinner, in order that he may make some graceful allusions to those works of art when the proper time comes. This is how the public speaker acts invariably, and what after all is public speaking but talking on a large scale. It should, however, be borne in mind that

you are never to rest contented in this practice of preparing your talk. You must intend ultimately to get rid of it, as the swimmer does of the corks which support his early flounderings.

And now a few words as a sort of *résumé*, or summing-up of the main characteristics of this great talker whose conversational proficiency we have been trying so hard to reduce to something like a system. To begin with, it must always be borne in mind that this illustrious personage is not a talker with a speciality. He is neither the story-teller, nor the describer, nor the topicist, nor the gossip of our first chapters. He is not the incessant talker—of whom something perhaps hereafter. He is simply the talker *par excellence*, the man at the top of the conversational tree, on the uppermost round of the conversational ladder. We have been for some time trying to find out what is the system upon which a great genius of this sort proceeds. We have observed of him already that he always times what he has to say with discretion and judgment, that he chooses his audience—the person to whom he addresses his speech—with consummate care, that he works a subject thoroughly while he has it in hand, not flying discursively from one thing to another, and that, to some extent, more or less, he prepares his talk beforehand. There is, however, more than this to note concerning our model talker. There are touches of something akin to genius which it is hard to set down in black and white. A beginner in our art will sit and watch a man like this with wonder, and, if he happens to be of a weakly, generous temper, with admiration. Full of wonder, at any rate, he observes that this great talker has a prodigious power of hitting on the right thing to talk about, and also of dealing with it in such fashion that what he says gets listened to. There are readable books—books that one finds no difficulty in getting through; and there is hearable talk—talk that one listens to gladly. Such is the talk of our professor. He knows when to stop, when to make a break, when to interrupt himself with some trifle, lest he should seem to perorate. He watches his audience to make sure that he is keeping them in hand. He feels that it requires consummate tact to know when to drop a subject, and when to persevere with it. If it is wearisome, and at the same time *not likely to lead to anything*, he will let it go, but if—though at present troublesome—he sees his way to something good arising out of it by-and-by, he will persevere, even though the old lady opposite, whose means entitle her to forget her manners, should yawn in his face a hundred times more openly than she does. But our great talker is seldom wearisome. He has a light manner of handling even important subjects—for these are not the days of elaborate sentences and rounded periods—and can be facetious, too, at the right moment, returning all the more effectively, after he and others have indulged in this vein freely, to his original subject with something, but not too much of seriousness.

Those words, “and others,” in the last sentence remind me of another element in the proceedings of this model talker which must not be forgotten. He always takes care to bring in other members of the com-

pany into his talk. Other members—but of what sort? Well, this great talker is a “child of this generation, wiser than the children of light,” and in this as in other things, he acts judiciously. He always takes care to conciliate and get upon his side any really dangerous rival whom he may see at table. “You, my dear Serjeant Buzfuz, will agree with me in this;” or, “You have had more experience in such cases than I have, what is your opinion?” There are some people in most companies of diners whom it is most desirable to conciliate, and some concerning whom a sharp practitioner like this present talker feels that it does not matter twopence whether they are conciliated or no. The representatives of the first of these two classes are chiefly those who are themselves talkers of distinction. Of these the man who is himself distinguished as a talker is ordinarily somewhat afraid. He knows that these others, who are in the profession too, can forward or retard his interests if they think proper. He is well armed, it is true, and can use his weapons well, but he knows that these, his *confrères*, are armed too, and that they are dexterous fencers, and will certainly take an opportunity of pinking him if in any way he is so unfortunate as to excite their displeasure. These, then, far more than such members of the society as may, through the possession of mere rank or riches, occupy a position of importance, he manages very carefully, bringing them, as has been said, into his talk, giving them opportunities of themselves holding forth in their turn, and listening while they do so on the great “caw me and I’ll caw you” principle. As to the others—those who don’t matter—our Glendoveer takes no heed of them. He talks through them and over them. He can afford to be rude to these, and of course, like a sensible man, he is. If one of these takes heart of grace, and actually interrupts him, his ordinary plan is to go on through such interruption, entirely ignoring it; while, if it is impossible to do this without risking a scene—which would be ridiculous and is therefore to be avoided—he merely waits till the person who has interrupted him has ceased to speak, and then, without even looking at him, or in any way acknowledging his existence, goes on again.

Not a pleasant person this, the reader will say perhaps, not a good-natured person, scarcely a commonly courteous person. I never said that he was. I only said that he was a great and successful talker. Alas! can anybody who is to be really successful in anything be altogether amiable, and considerate, and good-natured? From a great diplomatist or politician in his office, to a great beauty in her ball-room, can any one achieve a high position and yet be entirely urbane and kindly? Would not the first of these, if too amiable, be overwhelmed with office-seekers, with misunderstood geniuses, with crack-brained idiots generally; and would not the second, if only moderately good-natured, be the victim of all the conceited little snobs, and incapable performers, with whom every ball-room is tolerably well supplied? Is it not necessary to put others down, and to push them aside, if you would rise yourself? Is it not invariably through slaughter that men wade to thrones, be the realms over which such thrones dominate

of what sort—real or metaphorical—they may? At all events it is so with the conversational throne. The occupant of that high place will ordinarily be found to have reached it not without a considerable amount of social bloodshed, while he retains it much as boys do the position of “king of the castle,” by ruthlessly pushing down all those who seek to ascend the perch on which he is mounted. And, after all, this disregard of the interests of others when they happen to clash with his own, this truckling to some of whom he is afraid, this contempt of others whom he can afford to despise—are not all these vices simply those which belong to conquerors of every kind, and does not our successful talker share them with a great many other illustrious persons who have achieved distinction in all sorts of ways? At any rate, he is not wanting in good qualities to set against his defects. He is useful in his generation, courageous and diligent. He takes prodigious pains to master each subject of the day as it comes up. Indeed, his life is one of continual effort from morning till night, and sometimes from night till morning. His day’s work is by no means over when the mere business part of it is terminated, and when he takes his seat at the dinner-table. Indeed, it is a question whether the real town man, who lives in the world, can ever say that his day’s work is over till the moment comes when at last he stands by the side of his bed, with the extinguisher in his hand, hovering over his bed-room candle. Nay, he may be obliged to suspend his purpose, and defer his repose, even at such a supreme moment as this, an idea entering his head which will be available for conversational use at the Richmond dinner to-morrow, and which must be noted down before the extinguisher finally descends. And this sort of life is, after all, very much to the liking of a man like this. The excitement is necessary to him, and he enjoys himself, perhaps, as much, though not in the same way, as the honest *bourgeois* who unbuttons the lower fastenings of his waistcoat as he sits down to dinner, and says to the neighbour with whom he shares his meal: “Now, Jones my boy, let’s enjoy ourselves.”

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## On Iron Forts and Shields.

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To most persons it must appear in the highest degree surprising that after the years and money which have been spent in experiments upon iron armour, an important section of the subject should still remain imperfectly understood,—that a huge continent, so to express it, should exist to this day practically unexplored. Nevertheless this is literally the case. A few adventurous spirits have skirted the coasts or penetrated a short way into the interior; but the continent remains for all useful purposes a *terra incognita*. The fact is, that our attention has been almost exclusively directed towards one phase of the subject, which, we have at last realised, by no means comprises the whole. The application of iron to defensive purposes has two sides: one, the application of iron to the defence of ships and floating batteries; the other, the application of iron to the defence of forts and land batteries. Commonly these two subjects are jumbled up together, whereas in truth they demand separate consideration, and a very different treatment. They have their points of contact, but their paths lie for the most part in divergent directions. To the non-appreciation of this radical difference is mainly attributable the ignorance which prevails with regard to the defensive application of iron to forts. So intent have we been upon mail-coating our ships, so persistently have our principal experiments been directed to this point, that the complementary subject of mail-coating our forts has been in a very large measure lost sight of. But the defence and attack of forts are essentially different from the defence and attack of ships.\* The quantity of iron which a ship can carry must always be limited; considerations of bulk and weight here come into play which are absolutely of no account in the case of forts. A ship is, before all things, required to float, and its displacement imposes very clearly defined limits as to the weight of iron which can be defensively applied to it. A ship of war is also, as a general rule, required to be a sea-going, not a mere harbour vessel. This entails certain sea-going properties, to which a huge mass of iron stands in diametrical opposition. There are structural difficulties, too, in the case of ships, which fetter the hands of the armourer in a troublesome degree. Finally, a ship as a moving object, necessarily constructed of reasonable solidity and compactness, is scarcely exposed to that particular form of attack to which a fort is peculiarly liable. That is to say, a ship of average strength runs little chance of

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\* Our remarks, as a whole, have reference principally to iron-clad ships, as they at present exist, not necessarily to monitors and strange craft of the future, although many of the considerations must apply in a greater or less degree to all *floating* defences, however constructed.

being battered to pieces or breached by a series of heavy adjacent blows, or by salvoes of artillery. If the ship should remain stationary in action, or be surprised at anchor, it would of course be exposed to very much the same conditions of attack as a fort. But for practical purposes we may regard a war vessel as a moving object, while a land fort is essentially and necessarily a fixed defence; and in this distinction is comprised the main difference between the two. This distinction at once limits the application of armour to a ship, while in the case of a fort, it enables that limit to be disregarded. And, as a moving object, even in the present state of artillery science, is no easy mark,\* it follows that no system of attack which has its root in the accurate and certain delivery of a number of shots within a limited area,† is to be relied upon against shipping. Such a system is the system of attack by "racking." That attack, to be successful, must begin and end with prolonged, concentrated effect. And knowing as we do how much battering a vessel of ordinary structure and even average stoutness will endure before the general fabric is vitally injured, we may elect for practical purposes to disregard the racking attack as directed against iron-clad ships of war. The alternative and abstractedly superior method of attack is by penetration, and the distinct appreciation of this fact has properly governed the construction both of our ships and of the ordnance with which we should attack the ships of our enemies. It is evident, moreover, that the more destructive we make the effect of a single penetration, the nearer shall we be to the accomplishment of our object. To depend upon destroying a vessel by riddling it with several shot would be open to nearly the same objections—the same in kind, at least, if not in degree—as it would be to rely for victory upon the destruction of the vessel's structure. Both systems entail hitting the vessel so many times that a condition is imposed in either case which cannot be ensured. Therefore we have endeavoured in this country to apply the penetrative attack in its most intense and expeditious form. If one projectile can do the work, so much the more likely is it that the work will be done. It is indisputable that the effect of a single shell entering a vessel is vastly more destructive, vastly more fatal and demoralizing, than any effect which is likely to proceed from the entry of a single shot. Indeed, originally (although this point is too often lost sight of) ships were armour-clad to keep out shell rather than shot. Therefore, if we can succeed in introducing shell into the hull of an enemy, we shall be so much nearer the accomplishment of our object than if we merely succeeded in effecting an entry with shot. This is precisely the end towards which

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\* Although the accuracy of artillery fire has been largely increased by the introduction of rifled cannon, it must be borne in mind that the size and weight of the guns, and consequently the delay in training them upon a moving, ever-restless object, have increased in, perhaps, a greater ratio; and it is doubtful whether the total result, *as against such a moving object*, is not rather a loss than a gain of accuracy.

† To obtain racking effect the blows must fall together, the size of the ship is, therefore, of little account in a racking attack.

all our energies have been directed. We are not content, as the Americans are, to riddle a ship with shot; nor are we content, as the Americans once professed to be, to rely upon the tedious, probably hopeless, effect of battering the vessel to pieces. We desire to do our work more expeditiously, more completely, and more certainly; and, for this purpose, we aim, above all things, at nothing short of the highest development of the penetrative attack—the successful application of shell-fire. Conversely, our vessels are designed specially with a view to keeping out, if possible, the shells of an enemy.

It would be well if, in respect of the attack and defence of forts, we acted upon principles as sound and as well defined. The conditions here are sensibly different. We have at once a stationary object of attack in place of a moving one; and we have an object which will bear any amount of iron that we can afford to put upon it. The limit here is the limit imposed by considerations of economy;\* but as such considerations ought always to be subordinated to efficiency, we may fairly regard a properly constructed fort, or land defence, as at least secure against perforation. Here, then, failing penetrative effect, we must fall back upon the racking attack; and it so happens that this is the very attack to which a fort, as a fixed object, is peculiarly exposed. It is very much more easily hit than a ship; and assuming that the shots can be delivered with sufficient accuracy to strike within reasonable proximity of one another, we are at once assured of those primary conditions which go to produce racking or battering effect. Moreover, the exposed area of an iron fort being small, nearly every shot which strikes it will add its effect to that of the shot before it. In short, the broad distinction which exists between ships and forts in this matter is as follows:—Ships are difficult to rack, but may generally be penetrated; forts ought to be invulnerable to penetration, but are, to some extent, exposed to racking.

We propose, in the present article, to summarize our little acquired knowledge on the iron land defence question; to consider our present actual position with regard to such defences; and to indicate the nature of the improvements which we conceive must be applied before those defences can be regarded with confidence or satisfaction.

Although the subject of the defensive application of iron to land forts has never been properly or fully considered, it has, off and on, engaged the attention of scientific and military men for many years. The first and most natural protection for men to seek was a protection for their own bodies. Such a protection was found for several centuries in the body armour which archæologists still love to describe; and the prototype

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\* The difference in this respect between ships and forts was well expressed by the Special Committee on Iron:—"Whilst in a ship the thickness of iron must be in proportion to the size and buoyancy of the vessel, there is no limit, save that of expense, to the quantity which may be applied to the construction of a fort; and in the latter case, the question resolves itself into this, viz., what is the least expensive mode of applying iron in a form which will afford the requisite degree of protection."

of the Gibraltar shield is to be found in the shields which the warriors of old bore before them in battle. Then, as now, different constructions of armour had their supporters and detractors. Not to go back to the times when only leather or raw hides, and such like rude defences were employed, there was the chain-armour period and the plate-armour period; and we can fancy the busy discussion which doubtless raged over mail hoods and solid "bassinets," over helmets with flat tops and helmets with pointed tops, over chain suits and suits of armour plate, over "splinted" and solid breast-plates, over plain and "articulated" visors; the keen comparisons between the cost of this and the cost of that, the weights of the different suits, their efficiency, and the rest; just as, in these latter days, we do battle over laminated and solid plates, over flat-headed and pointed shot. Then came the time when the advance of gunnery science reduced armour to a useless incumbrance—a time which it is not impossible may some day repeat itself, when artillery shall reassert so decided a supremacy that armour shall once again be abandoned. Passing over the long intervening centuries during which armour was laid aside by every civilized nation, while different tactics became developed and new methods of warfare were contrived, we reach, not many years back, the period when men's minds reverted to the idea of meeting the new missiles with some opposing protection. But between this period and that of which we have spoken there was this characteristic difference:—The armour of the nineteenth century is applied not to individuals, but to men and matériel *en masse*. Our armoured "men-of-war" are men no longer, but huge vessels; our shields are ponderous defences, the cost of which is estimated in thousands of pounds, their weight in tons. Among the causes which led to the revival of iron armour, the development given, about the close of the last century, to horizontal shell-fire stands conspicuous, and each fresh step in artillery advance served to place the defences which had hitherto served at a greater disadvantage. In 1827 a proposition was made by an officer of Engineers, Major-General Ford, to use a material for the defence of forts better adapted to the exigencies of the day than any then employed. He suggested facing masonry forts with bars of wrought iron (fig. 1). This proposition was tested in the same year, at Woolwich. A block of Dundee stone, 6 feet by 5 feet, and 2 feet thick, was covered with 1½-inch wrought-iron bars, in two courses, of which the under layer was horizontal, and the upper vertical. The bars were attached by turning their ends over the flanks of the stone into dove-tailed grooves. Twenty rounds were fired at this structure with a 24-pounder gun, at a range of 634 yards. The result was unsatisfactory. Nineteen of the front bars were broken, and five of the inner layer. Four of the bars were entirely broken off; and the stone was so pulverized and shaken as, in the words of the committee, "to render further battering unnecessary."

It is not without interest to notice how many elements this first attempt to apply iron to land defence had in common with our last attempt in this

direction. Both consisted of successive layers of wrought iron, breaking joint; the difference between the bars of iron employed in the one and the planks used in the other being a difference of degree rather than of construction; both defences were tested with guns which inadequately represented the artillery power of the day; both were designed by Engineer officers; and both failed.

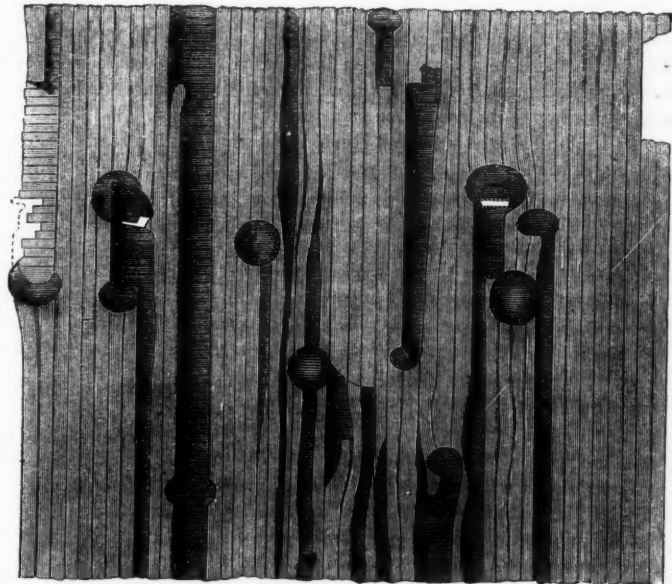


Fig. 1.—SHOWING STRUCTURE OF GENERAL FORD'S TARGET, AND ITS CONDITION AFTER THE EXPERIMENT.

After the failure of the Ford shield no attempt of the sort was renewed until 1840, although "considerable progress had been made in the meantime in the construction of iron ships for the mercantile marine." In 1840 the Admiralty instituted some fresh experiments, but these had for their object less the application of defensive armour than "to ascertain the value of iron as a material of construction for ships of war." The French were the first practically to apply iron to defensive purposes, and three iron-clad floating French batteries were engaged at Kinburn in 1855. In the preceding year, however, some important experiments had been made at Portsmouth with  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch plates of iron opposed to 32-pounder and 68-pounder guns—the latter of which seriously damaged the targets, "cracking the plates wherever they struck and driving large fragments into the backing." In 1856 4-inch plates were fired at at Woolwich with similar results. From this time to the present each year has witnessed new experiments against iron-plated structures. The forming of targets,

infinite in construction, has proceeded with scarcely any intermission for about twelve years. It would be tedious and beside our purpose to attempt even to summarize these extensive experiments. But it is well to recognize the fact, as affording a starting point, that about 1855-6 we became thoroughly alive to the importance of the subject, and have striven with more or less industry at its solution ever since. The investigation of the progress made during this period becomes enormously simplified if we confine ourselves, as we now propose to do, to the more important experiments bearing upon land defence only, because unfortunately, as we have before stated, our attention has been almost exclusively concentrated upon the use of iron as a protection for ships.

In 1858 rifled guns were first brought into play, and the conditions of attack and defence became thereby altered and complicated. A "special committee on iron-plates and guns" was appointed in 1859 (with General, then Colonel, St. George as president), and conducted a few experiments. But the committee was prematurely dissolved in the spring of 1860, before it had had time to elicit any useful results. About this period we come across the first really important experiment in connection with iron forts. A target, on what is called "Thornycroft's plan" (figs. 2, 3), was tested by the Ordnance Select Committee. This target consisted of horizontal bars of rolled iron, 14 inches thick by about 4 inches deep, fitting into each other with tongues and grooves, and fixed together by

bolts passing vertically through the bars. An embrasure was left in the centre of the target; and the whole was bedded in brickwork. The result of this experiment was deemed at the time to be so satisfactory that it was afterwards repeated, with a similar shield and with similar results. At the same time an embrasure with splayed sides, plated with wrought iron, was tested and unfavourably reported upon.

This was the position of the question when the Special Committee on Iron (Sir John Hay, president,) which was appointed on the 15th January, 1861, undertook its investigation. Some minor deductions had been arrived at, and the Thornycroft system appeared to be possessed of some merit; but as the whole of the experiments made up to this time had been carried out with comparatively feeble guns, and as rifled

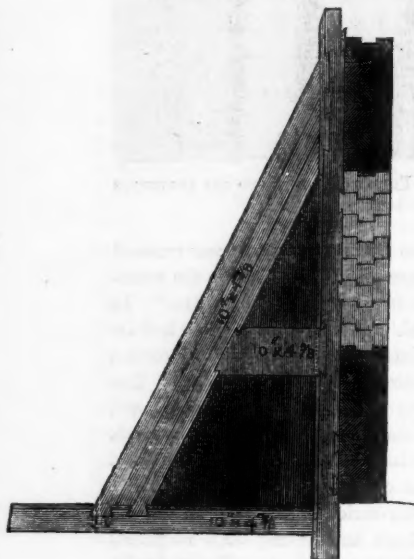
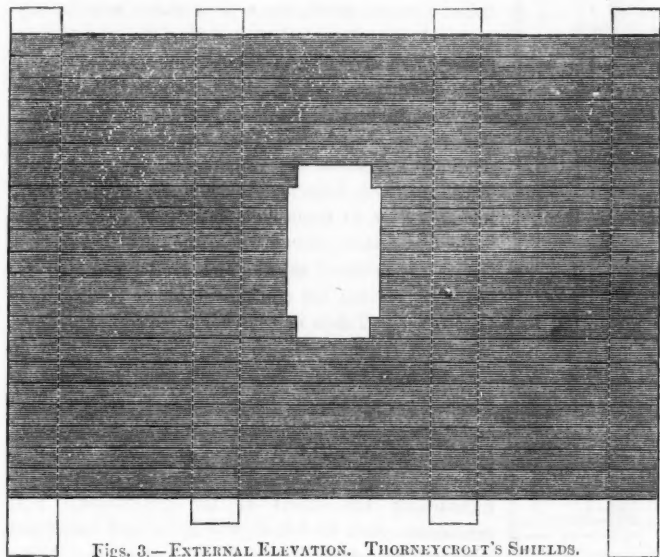


Fig. 2. SECTION OF THORNYCROFT'S SHIELD.

artillery had now acquired an established position which was improving daily, and as the small amount of attention which the subject had received was altogether disproportionate to its importance, it may be said that the Special Committee on Iron found little that was really useful made to their hands. Practically it was necessary for them to undertake the investigation *ab ovo*; to invite suggestions from engineers and iron makers; to sift the wheat from the chaff; to establish distinct and reliable principles; and, briefly, to say how, if iron was to be defensively applied at all, it could be best, most economically and most profitably used, having regard at once to military and mechanical considerations.



Figs. 3.—EXTERNAL ELEVATION. THORNERCROFT'S SHIELDS.

The encouraging results of the trial of the Thornercroft shields, and the simplicity and economy of the plan, induced the committee to continue experiments with this construction. A Thornercroft shield, composed of bars 10 inches thick, was fired at soon after the appointment of the committee. But on this occasion a new and more powerful rifled gun—a 120-pounder—was brought into action; a gun small, indeed, as compared with the weapons now in use, but more powerful than any gun which iron targets had up to that time been required to withstand. The result was unfavourable to the Thornercroft construction: the tongues were sheared, the bars fractured and displaced; and, generally, “such an effect was produced upon the target as to show that it was incapable of resisting the heavier natures of ordnance or shot above 100 lbs. in weight.”



stand prominent. In passing we may observe that the Admiralty, with that curious disregard of scientific and practical recommendations which has frequently led to such disastrous results, neglected for some two or three years to act upon that part of the committee's recommendations (an Admiralty committee, be it observed,) which had reference to the employment of substantial bolts. Although the committee stated at the beginning of 1862 that no bolts of less than 2 inches diameter ought to be used, the whole of our ships were, until 1864, fitted with bolts of only  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch diameter; while, as regards the construction of bolt, notwithstanding the very marked superiority of the Palliser bolt (reduced at the shank to the size to which they are reduced at the screwed end by the screw-thread), the Admiralty refrained from availing themselves of this construction until a year or two ago; and as regards the material of bolt, the "Acadian" iron, which the committee found to be superior to ordinary iron in the ratio of 2 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , has never been adopted; and, finally, the method of attachment by means of bolts screwing into the wood, "the marked success of which induced the committee to recommend the plan for further trial," has never from that day to this been tried again. These are incidental illustrations of the manner in which results, arrived at by careful and considerable experiment, are too often perversely disregarded.

To return, however, to land forts. Some experiments were made in January, 1862, against a target proposed by Mr. Hawkshaw (fig. 5), on a

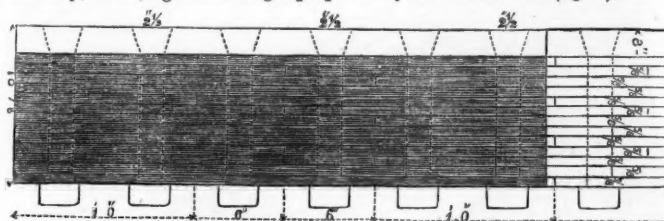


Fig. 5.—HAWKSHAW TARGET.

plan which had found much favour in the United States of America, viz., the employment of laminated armour in lieu of thick plates. Mr. Hawkshaw thus explained the reasons which induced him to recommend this construction: "Such a mode of construction would be that which would be most available for fixing armour plates to a vessel's side. But he was quite aware, and he had stated before the targets were made, that plates so laminated would not be so successful in resisting shot as if they were welded into one solid mass. On the other hand, such an arrangement of the plates afforded great facilities of construction. By its means the thickness of the plating could be increased or diminished as required, and the iron could be wrought into any form which might be thought desirable. A ship or a fort could thus be made more structurally perfect than by any other system with which he was acquainted; and at present he was not

aware of any other plan so good for securing a homogeneous structure." The Hawkshaw targets were composed of laminations of 5-8th-inch iron. One of the targets was faced with a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, the other with a 2-inch plate. Their respective thicknesses were 6 and  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The results of these trials were not encouraging, and the final conclusion arrived at by the committee was that these targets were "very weak in proportion to the quantity of metal they contained."

By this time some progress had been made with the inquiry ; or more properly to express it, a fair start had been effected. Targets composed of layers of bars had failed ; targets on the Thorneycroft plan had failed ; targets of laminated plates had failed ; and each of these targets represented, in some sense, a typical construction. The solid plate system had furnished the most hopeful results, and in the course of the trials of that system, it had become obvious that the details of attachment were of immense importance, and that *a purely rigid structure was absolutely inadmissible*. It would have been well if this one ray of light had been cherished and thenceforward applied to penetrate the obscurity in which the subject was enveloped. It might have shown the path to very different results

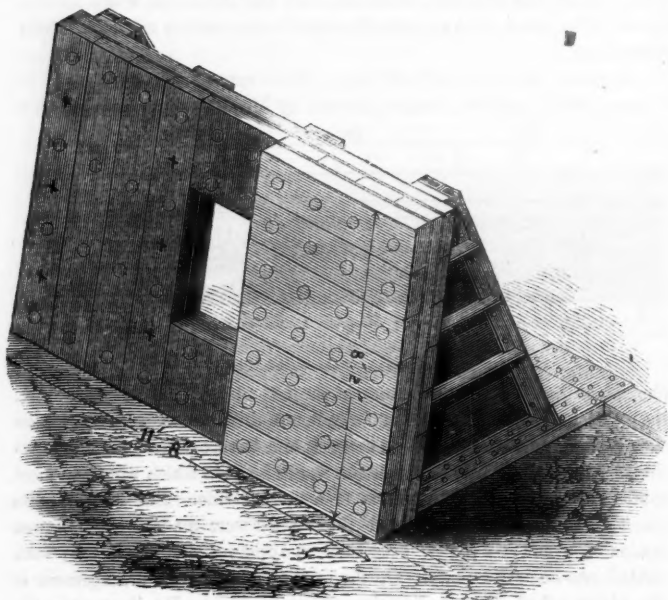


Fig 6.—INGLIS SHIELD.

from those which, groping and stumbling along without it, we have at last arrived at. But this was not to be ; and in 1862 a target, proposed by Captain Inglis, R.E., which embodies the system of construction which has since been applied in the Gibraltar shields, was erected and experimented

upon. The first target "consisted of planks of wrought iron, 5 inches thick, crossing each other in alternate layers, and secured by screw bolts passing through their centres, the whole being supported by diagonal boiler-plate struts at each end. The shield was 15 inches thick, in 3 planks, on one half its area, and 10 inches thick, in 2 planks, on the other half (fig. 6).

A second shield on the same principle was made of two layers, the front layers being 6 inches, 7 inches, and 8 inches thick, and the rear layers 5 inches thick. In all cases elastic washers of various descriptions were used, but in other respects the shields were rigid structures, being independent of wood backing. Thus the clue which had been touched in connection with the trial of Mr. Fairbairn's target was dropped, and, we may say at once, has never been fairly taken up again.

It is unnecessary to detail the various experiments which were carried out by the committee against these two targets; but the results of those experiments were such that they were able to report in favourable terms generally of this system of construction. They state that "Captain Inglis appears to have succeeded in producing a shield well adapted for the purpose intended. The fastenings stood the test remarkably well."—(Report 1862.) "Our experiments have shown that a good shield for coast batteries can be obtained at a reasonable cost by the use of two layers of plates, or rather planks of wrought iron, crossing each other, and secured through their centres by screw bolts."—(Report 1862.) "The shield is by far the best which has yet been tried for land purposes."—(Report 1863.) "The shields answered well, and have formed the best structure of the kind that we have yet met with."—(Report 1864.) "The construction appears to combine strength, simplicity, and cheapness of manufacture."—(Report 1862.) Favourable as is the expression of opinion which these passages convey, they do not exhaust the merits of the "plank upon plank" system of construction. This system possesses, over and above its cheapness, strength, and simplicity, the considerable merit of being easily erected and repaired; and the merit not less conspicuous of adaptability to the exigencies of the day, or of the particular position which the shield may be required to occupy, by the addition or subtraction of armour, according to circumstances. It remains now to connect the successful Inglis shield of 1862 with the unsuccessful Gibraltar shield of five years later. The explanation of the very opposite results which have attended the trial of the two structures is to be found, in some large measure, in the words, "five years later." During those five years the power of ordnance has been enormously developed. There has been a steady growth on the side of the attack, which must place the defence, should it remain stationary, at a sensible disadvantage. It will, perhaps, be urged here, that while the Gibraltar shield failed under the blows of a 250-pounder (9-inch) gun and 43 lbs. of powder, the Inglis shield was tested with a 300-pounder gun and 45 lbs. of powder; and that, therefore, any difference in the ordnance employed is rather in favour of the Gibraltar

shield. This argument overlooks the very important consideration that the Inglis shield was fired at only with a *cast-iron* 300-pounder projectile, while the Gibraltar shield was exposed to the attack of Palliser shell.

Again, the attack of the Inglis shield was at 200 yards, that of the Gibraltar shield at 70 yards.

We would gladly stop here, and say that these altered conditions of attack fairly accounted for the opposite results of the two trials. Even if we did stop here, however, the conclusions to be drawn would be little creditable to those who are responsible for the Gibraltar shield, for it is surely inexcusable that, in a transitional state of artillery, a construction of defence should be adopted on a large scale, and applied without trial, solely on the grounds that that construction had satisfied the requirements of half a decade back. The duty which devolved upon the engineer department of the War Office, in designing shields for erection in 1867-8, was obviously to design such defences as would be capable of resisting, not merely the guns of 1862-3, but those of the more advanced period; and this, even on the most moderate view of the circumstances, the engineer department failed to do. It will scarcely be credible if we add that, so far from increasing, as was evidently necessary, the strength of the shield, the engineers actually reduced it; nay, that they did this in the face of the following decided expression of opinion on the part of the Iron Committee:—*"It appears that even the 15-inch shield, if constructed in three layers 5 inches thick, could not long resist such a gun as the 300-pounder, with large charges of powder . . . nothing less than 7½-inch iron will resist it. Probably, therefore, planks or plates, 8 inches thick, are the least that should be used in a coast battery."*—(Report 1862, p. 117.)

In short, what has actually been done amounts to this:—A certain structure was reported, in 1862, to possess considerable advantages, absolute and abstract; but even at that time the strongest applied form of that construction was officially pronounced incapable of resisting the guns of that day. Upon this, and without any further trials or experiments whatever, the officers who are called upon four or five years later to design suitable iron defences, adopt that construction, and proceed to apply it off-hand, in a form very much weaker than that which had been declared to be too weak already. Instead of three thicknesses of iron, they employ two; instead of a total thickness of 15 inches, they give a total thickness of 12 inches; instead of making the front plates, as even five years back was declared to be necessary, at least 8 inches in thickness, they employ plates of only 5½ inches; and these structures they cause to be manufactured at a cost of 35,000*l.*, and to be issued to resist guns of infinitely greater power than those which had already sufficed to destroy the stronger construction. A train of blunders so carefully laid only needed the application of a match to flash forth a disastrous result; and it is difficult to understand how any other consequences than those which actually ensued could have been anticipated. Indeed, the reluctance with which any experiments against the Gibraltar shield were undertaken, and the foolish attempt to

make the experiments secret, almost warrant the supposition that the failure was foreseen. What that failure amounted to may be told in a few words. The Gibraltar shield (fig. 7) consists of two thicknesses of iron,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  and 5 inches respectively, and an iron skin of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The total thickness is thus 12 inches. The shield is supported by struts and horizontal girders at the back.

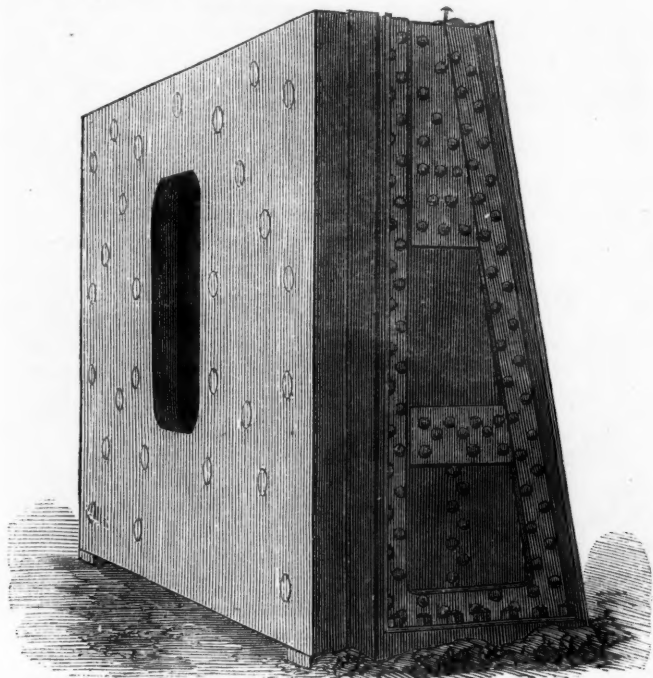


Fig. 7.—GIBRALTAR SHIELD.

On the 25th October last, two shots were fired at the shield from the 9-inch rifled gun with reduced charges. Neither of these shots penetrated, but they sufficed to break nineteen of the bolts, and to drive the nuts and bolt-heads in a shower to the rear. The most important experiment, however, was that which took place on the 19th December, 1867, when five rounds were fired against the shield. Two of these rounds were 9-inch solid Palliser shot, with charges equivalent to a range of 400 yards; two 9-inch Palliser shells, with full charges, at 70 yards; and one 15-inch Rodman shot, with a charge equivalent to a range of 400 yards. The result was fatal to the shield, and not less damaging to the reputation of its designers. The girders behind the shield were broken, as were several bolts; the plates were cracked; the struts were bent; the whole struc-

ture was shaken; and last, but not least, one of the Palliser shells, striking on a weak spot, actually penetrated the target with terrible destructive effect (fig. 8).

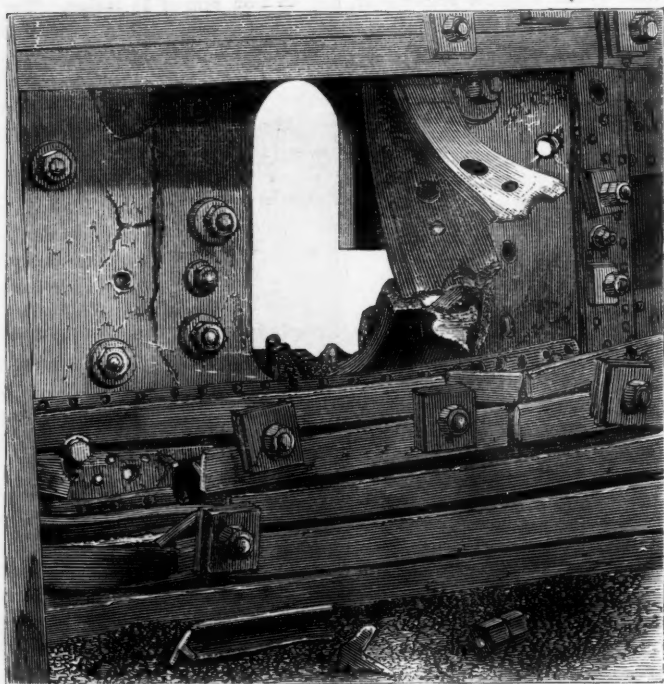


Fig. 8.—BACK VIEW OF GIBRALTAR SHIELD AFTER EXPERIMENT.

No ingenuity or special pleading could convert this experiment into anything but a disastrous failure; and yet, as we have explained, it was a result which followed as a natural and inevitable consequence from the course adopted by the designers of the shield. Our object, however, is not to lavish strictures upon the engineer department. The story suggests its own comments; and if the engineers deserve censure in this matter, most assuredly it has been dispensed to them with no niggard hand. And if more censure be needed, there is every prospect that it will be forthcoming when Parliament meets. We are now concerned, however, less with the shortcomings of a particular department than with the development of the iron land defence question; and to trace this properly we must return to the Special Committee on Iron. We have seen to what point the committee had brought the subject; we have seen particular systems condemned, and we have seen a particular system extolled. At the same time it is not less noticeable that the committee was very far

from having worked on this question. Some most valuable general principles it had indeed deduced. It had decided that soft wrought iron was the best known defensive material; that a plain, flat, solid plate, opposing a direct surface to attack, was a superior disposition of the metal to any other, and the larger the superficial area of the plate the better; that "tongueing and grooving" were objectionable; that a rigid backing increased the resistance to penetration, but that an elastic backing and elastic washers increased the resistance to concussive effect; that wood backings were indispensable (in their application to ships, the point being left open as regards forts); that wood facings were of little permanent value. These conclusions the committee expressed in no undecided terms, and these conclusions have since been generally accepted as sound fundamental propositions. But they had nearly all been arrived at in connection with the defence of ships—their application to the defence of forts being reserved by the committee for determination by further experiments. At this important stage of the inquiry the Admiralty thought fit to dissolve the committee, leaving the subject of iron forts to take care of itself, or worse still, as it has proved, to be taken care of by the engineers. It might have been expected that somebody would now have taken up the tangled threads and attempted some completion of the design. But the shuttle was not resumed. It presently occurred, it is true, to the Ordnance Select Committee to make an experiment, and for this purpose a most expensive granite casemate, protected partly by a Chalmers' target of great strength and partly by a solid 13-inch block of iron, was erected and fired at in 1865. It is impossible to say that this experiment had any practical result, since it was never concluded. As part of a series it might have been useful; but as an isolated and incomplete experiment it was virtually thrown away. One fact it did serve to throw into bolder relief, viz., the absolute uselessness of granite as a means of defence against modern artillery—in other words, the absolute necessity of deciding upon some useful application of iron. But of this fact no advantage was taken. The engineers proceeded complacently with their shields and forts according to their own preconceived notions, wholly innocent of any intention to look either to the right hand or to the left, backwards or forwards, to accept hints or suggestions, and with a magnificent resolution to permit, under no circumstances, anything of the nature of a thorough experimental investigation of the subject.

Such is in outline the history up to the present time of our iron forts, and a lamentable history it is. After years of desultory experimenting we have arrived at the point of realizing that we have no single reliable iron land defence, and that we have a great many which are little more than worthless. With regard to the iron forts (as distinguished from shields) now in process of construction, we have this encouragement, that it is possibly not yet too late to modify or reform their construction so as to render them not quite so worthless as the Gibraltar shields.

Assuming that the appreciation of these facts will lead to a systematic

inquiry into the whole question of the application of iron armour to land defences, we would offer a few general remarks bearing upon the subject. We set out by distinguishing between the defence of ships and the defence of forts. That distinction we explained as consisting mainly in the fact, that ships being limited in the thickness of armour which they can carry, and scarcely exposed to prolonged or concentrated battering, require before all things to be made secure against penetration; forts, on the other hand, being unlimited in the thickness of their armour, and being specially exposed to repeated hammering upon a small area, if struck at all, are to be regarded as defences more liable to be racked than perforated. That the Gibraltar shield was both perforated and racked proves merely the extremely defective construction of this particular defence—the penetration being an abnormal effect, so to speak, superadded to the more natural effect of racking. In designing a fort it should therefore be laid down as a first necessity that the structure should if possible be rendered secure against racking; secondly, and in the nature of a matter of course, that it should be impenetrable. It must be evident that a rigid structure is very much less likely to satisfy the first and more difficult of these conditions than one compounded of iron and an elastic backing. Theory and practice both go to establish this. “A wood backing,” says the Special Committee on Iron, “has the advantage of yielding in some degree to the distortion of the plate; of distributing the effect over a larger area; of *diminishing the damage to the general structure.*”—(Report 1862.) In other words, a wood backing is the main element of resistance to that racking effect to which a fort is especially exposed. In this fundamental particular the Gibraltar shield and similar structures fail, and we hold that any structure designed for a land fort (unless it be an enormous and therefore disproportionately expensive solid block of iron without attachments of any description) must without a wood backing, or its equivalent in some other form, be radically defective.

The principal argument against the use of a wood backing in forts is that it is perishable. The answer to this is twofold: 1st, That it is better and more economical to have an efficient defence for five or ten years than to be provided permanently with an inefficient one; 2nd, That the problem of making a wood backing removable, so that it may be stored in peace time and applied only (as it is proposed to store and apply the greater part of the bolts of the Gibraltar shields) when the necessity arrives, is not insoluble.

Wood backings have other advantages besides the salient advantages of reducing the concussion and absorbing the force of the blow. They are useful also in preventing fragments of the iron from entering the vessel, and in holding in their places such portions of the plate as may be broken off, and retaining their services to a certain extent. This last point is of considerable importance where the structure is liable, like a fort, to be struck many times about the same spot.

In the next place, since the most dangerous and probable effect upon a fort is hammering to pieces, the bolts or other means of attachment

ought to be at a minimum with regard to quantity, and at a maximum as to strength and efficiency. The Inglis construction is again radically defective in this respect. It entails the use of a very large number of bolts; and in its last unfortunate application many of these bolts are obviously too weak. This was rendered curiously evident on the occasion of the first "secret" trial of the Gibraltar shield, when nineteen of the bolts were broken owing to a defect in their construction. In the last trial, when the bolts were made strictly on Major Palliser's system, the attachment proved much more secure, and comparatively few bolts were broken except those actually struck. But we believe that a great deal requires yet to be done towards the further improvement of the fastenings. The "Acadian iron," which furnished such good results when tried by the committee four years ago, and the iron screws into the wood-backing in lieu of through-bolts, might profitably be further experimented upon. The system of iron screws, we may notice in passing, has this advantage, that no bolt-heads or nuts are exposed at the back of the target, and, in the event of the failure of the fastenings, no missile matter of this description can be driven into the interior of the work. Elastic washers, packings of soft material round the bolts, bevelling of the bolt-holes, and similar contrivances which may be experimentally shown to diminish the tendency to fracture of the bolts, ought to be applied, as a matter of course, to the fastenings of iron structures.

Another source of weakness in the plank upon plank construction is comprised in the liability of the outer plates to shift over the inner plates under the blows of projectiles (particularly pointed projectiles striking at an angle), shearing the bolts as if they were cut with a huge knife. This is a different effect upon the bolts to that produced by concussion *pur et simple*; and, next to the absence of a wood-backing, this defect of construction is perhaps the most objectionable feature in the system. This ground of objection to the system is of very much more moment than the argument that "laminated" structures are inferior to solid plates in resistance to penetration. The loss of resisting power due to the employment of several thick plates in place of a single thicker one has been very much exaggerated. The Inglis or Gibraltar shields are not, in fact, "laminated" structures in the ordinary acceptance of the term, or, at least, not in that acceptance which infers material loss of resisting power. The Hawkshaw target (p. 197) was a laminated structure, and proved deficient in its power of opposing direct perforation. But when the layers are composed of *thick plates*, the weakness in this respect becomes sensibly diminished. This has been proved experimentally, and it is probable that three 5-inch plates would be equal at least to one 13-inch plate, instead of being equal merely to a plate of between 8 and 9 inches, as they would be if the rule of the sum of the squares of the thicknesses held good. This rule, however approximately correct it may be in the case of thin laminations (though even here it is liable to considerable deductions), fails in the case of thick

laminations, or stout layers as we should prefer to express it, to take into account the considerable increase of resisting power derived by one plate from the support afforded by those behind it; it fails also to take into account the non-liability of structures of this sort to crack through, as solid plates of almost any thickness will frequently crack even under blows a long way short of complete penetration. These corrections bring a *thick* compound structure almost on to a par with the single-plate construction in respect of resistance *to penetration*.

A far more capital defect in the Inglis construction, considered from the penetration point of view, is the weakness at the joints. This weakness was not so apparent when flat or round-headed projectiles were used; but the employment of pointed projectiles, the nose of which is liable to strike on a joint and to effect an entry by a short or easy cut, throws out this defect into conspicuous relief. In this respect the Gibraltar shield is an improvement on the Inglis shield, and for this improvement the engineers deserve more credit than they have received. The front layers of the present shields are composed of two large plates instead of several small planks; and there are thus only two joints (one on each side of the embrasure) exposed to the impinging projectiles. But the strength of a structure is to be measured at its weakest part; and this law received a striking confirmation on the occasion of the late trial, when the shell which penetrated did happen actually to strike upon a joint, and so got through. As large a superficial area of plate as possible was pronounced by the Special Committee on Iron to be desirable—and this without reference to the question of joints in their connection with pointed projectiles. It is therefore important that the front of the shield should consist of a single plate, without any joints whatever. Not less important is it to make this plate of such a thickness that it will be capable of taking most of the "work" out of the shot; and probably no guarantee of security in this respect would be afforded at the present day by plates of less than 9 or 10 inches. Such plates our iron makers are now able to produce at a cost of only 5*l.* or 6*l.* a ton in excess of the cost of a 5 or 5½-inch plate.

Applying these various considerations, which by no means exhaust the subject, to the Gibraltar shield, we not only see why the failure of the structure was inevitable, but we are tempted to doubt whether the system can ever be made to furnish, as against the guns of the present day, any useful results. The process of patching up would probably end in improving the shield off the face of the earth, and the outlay which such improvements would involve must be very considerable. Our suggestions, therefore, are offered less with reference to the existing shields than with reference to those which we may hereafter be called upon to design. We lay down as fundamental requirements for such shields—and for iron land forts generally—that they should be composed of as few parts as possible, consistent with a reasonable degree of economy; that the system of attachment should be the best that can be contrived; that the front plates should be large enough to check the blow; and that the wood-backing should be

capable of absorbing it. Non-observance of any one of these points is sufficient to ensure failure; what wonder, then, that the country should be now bewailing the expenditure of 85,000*l.* on shields which fail in every one of them.

The two main grounds of extenuation suggested on behalf of the designers of the Gibraltar shield are: 1st, That the shields were subjected to a more severe test than they were designed to stand; 2nd, That although seriously damaged, they still afforded "a fair amount of protection"—which is all that is desired. Both these arguments appear to us to embody serious fallacies. With regard to the shields having been tested with undue severity by the guns having been fired at 70 yards' range, while 400 yards had been laid down as the point of nearest possible approach for an attacking vessel, the argument would be forcible enough if the guns used had been the strongest of the day. We are inclined to think that no shield for land defence need be required to meet a closer attack than one at 400 yards' range; the guns of the fort itself, and a belt of torpedoes, ought to secure this. But, unfortunately, the damage which was wrought by the 9-inch gun at 70 yards, would be inflicted by the 10-inch gun at, probably, 1,000 yards, or even greater ranges. And the 10-inch gun is greatly inferior in power to the 12-inch and 13-inch guns now being built, as it is inferior to the 30-inch, if not to the 20-inch American smooth-bore.

As to the shield being required to afford only what is called "a fair amount of protection," that is a view which we are disposed utterly to scout. A shield, if supplied at all, ought in our opinion to be made as nearly as possible impregnable. It is reasonable and right to assume that it will be exposed to the deliberate attack of the most powerful guns which an enemy can bring against it, if he should see fit to attack it at all. It will be no question of a mere passing shot, of a half-hearted effort. If the destruction of a particular fort occupying an important position should form part of the plan of attack, an enemy worthy of the name would probably strain every energy to compass its destruction, and in order to do this would concentrate such a fire as only the strongest structures could withstand. To entice men into casemates which would soon come rattling about their ears, and which would lend their own hurtling fragments to their destruction, is simply to entice them into a trap, into which it would be very difficult to inveigle them a second time. Nothing is so intimidating, nothing so damaging to the morale of soldiers, as to find that their confidence is misplaced,—whether in a general, in an arm, in a position, or in defences built upon the sand.

Moreover, the men at the guns might be apt to be critical as to what constitutes "a fair amount of protection." They might reasonably object to accept the construction of the term which the engineers might arbitrarily assign to it; and most assuredly the bulk of artillerymen would decline to regard the protection afforded by the Gibraltar shield as fair, or in any sense sufficient—whatever the designers might please to call it.

We have left ourselves little space to consider the iron fort question from the side of the attack ; but it is well to anticipate an objection which our arguments might suggest with regard to the suitability of our present guns for attacking such defences. If our present system of ordnance be designed specially with reference to the penetration of iron ships of war, and if, as we contend, such a mode of attack would be hopeless against a really well-built fort, it may seem to follow that our guns and projectiles can hardly be adapted for use against forts, whatever may be their merits against ships. This is true to a certain extent of our projectiles ; it is not true of our guns, or more properly of our system of ordnance. A brittle, pointed, Palliser projectile is no more suitable for racking heavy iron shields than would be a stiletto for smashing open a door. But the employment of our present guns by no means limits us to the use of such projectiles. On the contrary, a conspicuous merit of our system of ordnance, as compared with the smooth-bore system, is that it permits of the use either of a light shot of the most suitable penetrative form and material, with a high velocity, or a heavy shot, of the form and material best calculated to rack, with a low velocity. But undoubtedly projectiles of the latter description ought to form part of our ordnance stores, and it is high time that attention was seriously directed to this point.

This is no place for discussing the relative merits of smooth-bore and rifled guns as racking ordnance. Probably the advantages would be found to incline in this respect towards large smooth-bore guns, *at short ranges*. But this advantage would be more than counterbalanced on the whole by the very great superiority of the rifled gun at long ranges—at the ranges at which a ship would naturally desire to engage ; and by its superior accuracy.

Active measures ought now to be taken towards the establishment of a good system of vertical fire. We have not at present in the service a single rifled mortar ; but in view of the increasing impregnability of defences to horizontal fire, and of the difficulties which exist in the way of securing the same degree of impregnability to vertical fire, it is surely desirable that the development of a system of attack of this sort, whether against forts or ships, should be no longer neglected.

In conclusion, we would point the moral of this long story. It is, we think, plain enough, that the subject of iron forts has received far less attention than its importance deserves ; that, indeed, we have comparatively little connected experimental knowledge of it ; that an urgent necessity exists for an immediate and thorough investigation of the whole question of iron land defences. It should be worked out step by step, as the application of armour to ships has been worked out. We know of no better hands to which the inquiry could be confided than those of the Special Committee on Iron, which, having been recently revived by Sir John Pakington, is now sitting at the War Office. The instructions of the committee at present, we understand, extend only to pointing out the causes of failure of the Gibraltar shield, and to suggesting some plan for strengthening it.

But it is possible, as it is most desirable, to invite the committee to undertake the larger subject which now presents itself for solution. The subject cannot be profitably dealt with by a single department, for the simple reason that no single department is competent to exhaust all the various considerations, mechanical, metallurgical, and military, which belong to it; nor, indeed, could any committee do this without engaging upon a series of careful experiments; but it is just such a series of experiments that we deem it imperative should be forthwith undertaken, under competent and independent supervision.

Whatever body may be appointed to deal with the subject, it is indispensable that that branch of the service for whose immediate protection these defences are designed should be largely represented—we mean the artillery. Especially strong is the necessity for a considerable infusion of this element if the “fair amount of protection” theory is to receive any consideration. In this element, however, the Iron Committee is at present conspicuously deficient. There is only one artillery member; and we would suggest, either the addition of one or more artillery officers, or—as the question is essentially a question of land defence—the appointment of an artilleryman in place of the naval officer who at present officiates as president. It is right, however, to append to this last suggestion a distinct disclaimer of any intention to impugn Sir John Hay’s zeal or ability, to which, on the contrary, we would desire to bear grateful testimony.

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## My Neighbour Nelly.

### CHAPTER I.



HEY were both my neighbours, of course ; but I do not understand what kind of hearts people have who can apportion their love equally, according to the claims of justice. I saw as much of one sister as the other. And Martha was an excellent girl, quite honest and friendly and good ; but as for Ellen, there never could be any question about her. One did not even think of discriminating which were her special good qualities. She was Ellen, that was enough ; or Nelly, which I prefer, for my part. We all lived at Dinglefield Green in the old days. It is a model of a village, in

one sense of the word ; not the kind of place, it is true, to which the name is generally applied, but a village orné, as there are cottages ornés. The real little hamlet, where the poor people lived, was at a little distance, and gave us plenty of occupation and trouble. But for Dinglefield Green proper, it was such a village as exists chiefly in novels. The Green was the central point, a great triangular breadth of soft grass, more like a small common than a village green, with the prettiest houses round—houses enclosed in their own grounds,—houses at the very least embosomed in pretty gardens, peeping out from among the trees. None of us were *very* rich ; nor was there anything that could be called a “ place ” in the circle of dwellings. But I believe there was as much good blood and good connection among us as are usually to be found in a much larger community. The great house opposite, which was separated from the Green by a ha-ha, and opened to us only a pretty sweep of lawn, looking almost like a park, belonged to Sir Thomas Denzil, whose pedigree, as everybody knows, is longer than the Queen’s. Next to him was Mrs. Stokes’ pretty cottage—one of the Stokes who have given their name to places all over the country : the son is now General Stokes, a C.B., and I don’t know what besides : and her daughter married Lord Leamington. Next to that—but it is needless to give a directory of the place,—probably our



MY NEIGHBOUR NELLY.



neighbours, generally, may appear in their proper persons before my story is done.

The sisters lived next to me: my house lay, as their father said, athwart their bows. The Admiral was too much a gentleman to talk ship, or shop, as the gentlemen call it, in ordinary conversation; but he did say that my cottage lay athwart his bows; and the girls admitted that it would have been unpleasant had it been anybody but me: I was then a rather young widow, and having no children, did not want much of a house. My cottage was very pretty. I think myself that there was not so pretty a room in all the Green as my drawing-room; but it was small. My house stood with its gable-end to the Green, and fronted the hedge which was the boundary of Admiral Fortis's grounds. His big gate and my small one were close together. If the hedge had been cut down, I should have commanded a full view of the lawn before his house, and the door; and nobody could have gone out or come in without my inspection. They were so friendly, that it was once proposed to cut it down, and give me and my flowers more air; but we both reflected that we were mortal; circumstances might change with both of us: I might die, and some one else come to the cottage whose inspection might not be desirable; or the Admiral might die, and his girls be married, and strangers come. In short, the end of it was that the hedge remained; but instead of being a thick holly wall, like the rest of my enclosure, it was a picturesque hedge of hawthorn, which was very sweet in spring and a perfect mass of convolvulus in autumn; and it had gaps in it and openings. Nelly herself made a round cutting just opposite my window, and twined the honeysuckle into a frame for it. I could see them through it as I sat at work. I could see them at their croquet, and mounting their horses at the door, and going out for their walks, and doing their capricious gardening. It was Nelly only who ever attempted to work in the garden; the other was afraid of her hands and her complexion, and a hundred things. Nelly was not afraid of anything—not even of Mr. Nicholson, the gardener, who filled me with awe and trembling. Perhaps you may say that there was not much fear of her complexion. She was brown, to begin with; but the prettiest brown,—clear, with crimson flushes that went and came, and changed her aspect every moment. Her eyes were the softest dark eyes I ever saw; they did not penetrate or flash or sparkle, but glowed on you with a warm lambent light. In winter, with her red cloak on, she was the prettiest little figure; and the cold suited her, and made her glow and bound about like a creature of air. As for Martha, she was a great deal larger and whiter than her sister. I suppose, on the whole, she was the prettier of the two, though she did not suit me. They were their father's only children, and he was very fond of them. Their mother had been dead so long that they had no recollection of her; and the girls were not without those defects which girls brought up by a man are so apt to have. They were rather disposed to think that anything could be had for a little coaxing. Perhaps they had more confidence in their own blandishments

than is common with girls, and were more ready to use them, knowing how powerless papa was against their arts. They were badly educated, for the same reason. The Admiral was too fond of them to part with them; and he was one of the men who fear reports and rumours, and would not have a lady, not even a middle-aged governess, in his house. He had expensive masters for his girls, and the girls did what they pleased with those excellent gentlemen, and grew up with the very smallest amount of education compatible with civilization. I rather liked it, I confess, in Nelly, who was very bright, and asked about everything, and jumped at an instant understanding of most things she heard of. But it did not answer in Martha's case, who was not bright, and was the sort of girl who wanted to be taught music, for instance, properly, and to practise six hours a day. Without being taught, and without practising, the good girl (for Nelly, as she explained, had no taste for music,) thought it her duty to play to amuse her friends; and the result was a trial to the temper of Dinglefield Green. We had some very good musicians among us, and Martha heard them continually, but never was enlightened as to the nature of her own performance; whereas Nelly knew, and grew crimson every time her sister approached the piano. But Nelly was my favourite, as everybody said; and perhaps, as a natural consequence, I did her sister less than justice.

We led a very pleasant, neighbourly life in those days. Some of us were richer, and some poorer; but we all visited each other. The bigger houses asked the smaller ones to dinner, and did not disdain to pay a return visit to tea. In the summer afternoons, if you crossed the Green (and could hear anything for the noise the cricketers made), you would be sure to hear, in one quarter or another, the click of the croquet balls, and find all the young people of the place assembled over their game, not without groups of the elder ones sitting round on the edge of the well-mown lawns. When I settled there first, I was neither young nor old, and there was a difficulty which party to class me with; but by degrees I found my place among the mothers, or aunts, or general guardians of the society; and by degrees my young neighbours came to be appropriated to me as my particular charge. We walked home together, and we went to parties together; and, of course, a little gossip got up about the Admiral—gossip which was entirely without foundation, for I detest second marriages, and, indeed, have had quite enough of it for my part. But Nelly took a clinging to me—I don't say a fancy, which would be too light a word. She had never known a woman intimately before—never one older than herself, to whom she was half a child and half a companion. And she liked it; and so did I.

There was one absurd peculiarity about the two girls, which I shall always think was the foundation of all the mischief. They never called each other, nor were called by their names. They were "the Sisters" to everybody. I suppose it was a fancy of their father's—he called them "the Sisters" always. They called each other Sister when

they spoke to or of each other. It annoyed me at first, and I made an attempt to change the custom. But Martha disliked her name. She had been called after her grandmother, and she thought it was a shame. "Martha and Ellen!" she said, indignantly. "What could papa be thinking of? It sounds like two old women in the almshouse. And other girls have such pretty names. If you call me Martha, Mrs. Mulgrave, I will never speak to you again." When one thought of it, it was a hard case. I felt for her, for my own name is Sarah, and I remember the trouble it was to me when I was a girl; and the general use and wont of course overcame me at last. They were called "the Sisters" everywhere on the Green. I believe some of us did not even know their proper names. I said mischief might come of it, and they laughed at me; but there came a time when Nelly, at least, laughed at me no more.

It was in the early summer that young Llewellyn came to stay with the Denzils at their great house opposite. He was a distant cousin of theirs, which was a warrant that his family was all that could be desired. And he had a nice little property in Wales, which had come to him unexpectedly on the death of an elder brother. And, to crown all, he was a sailor, having gone into the navy when he was a second son. Of course, being a naval man, it was but natural that he should be brought to the Admiral first of all. And he very soon got to be very intimate in the house; and, indeed, for that matter, in every house in the Green. I believe it is natural to sailors to have that hearty, cordial way. He came to see me, though I had no particular attraction for him, as cheerfully as if I had been a girl, or alas! had girls of my own. Perhaps it was the opening in the hedge that pleased him. He would sit and look, but he did not speak to me of the sisters,—more's the pity. He was shy of that subject. I could see he was in real earnest, as the children say, by his shyness about the girls. He would say something about them, and then rush on to another subject, and come back again half-an-hour after to the identical point he had started from. But I suppose it never occurred to him that I had any skill to fathom that. He went with them on all their picnics, and was at all their parties; and he rode with them, riding very well for a sailor. The rides are beautiful round Dinglefield. There is a royal park close at hand, where you can go and hide yourself in grassy glades and alleys without number. I have even been tempted to put myself on my old pony, and wander about with them on the springy turf under the trees; though, as for their canterings and galloping, and the way in which Nelly's horse kicked its heels about when it got excited, they were always alarming to me. But it was a pleasant life. There is something in that moment of existence when the two who are to go together through life see each other first, and are mysteriously attracted towards each other, and forswear their own ideal and all their dreams, and mate themselves under some secret compulsion which they do not understand,—I say there is something in such a moment which throws a charm over life to all their surroundings. Though it be all over for us;

though, perhaps, we may have been in our own persons thoroughly disenchanted, or may even have grown bitter in our sense of the difference between reality and romance, still the progress of an incipient wooing gives a zest to our pleasure. There is something in the air, some magical influence, some glamour, radiating from the hero and the heroine. When everything is settled, and the wedding looms in sight, fairyland melts away, and the lovers are no more interesting than any other pair. It is, perhaps, the uncertainty, the chance of disaster; the sense that one may take flight or offence, or that some rival may come in, or a hundred things happen to dissipate the rising tenderness. There is the excitement of a drama about it—a drama subject to the curious contradictions of actual existence, and utterly regardless of all the unities. I thought I could see the little sister, who was my pet and favourite, gradually grouping thus with young Llewellyn. They got together somehow, whatever the arrangements of the party might be. They might drive to the Dingle, which was our favourite spot, in different carriages, with different parties, and at different times; but they were always to be found together under the trees when everybody had arrived. Perhaps they did not yet know it themselves; but other people began to smile, and Lady Denzil, I could see, was watching Nelly. She had other views, I imagine, for her young cousin, since he came to the estate. Nelly, too, once had very different views. I knew what her ideal was. It, or rather he, was a blond young giant, six feet at least, with blue eyes, and curling golden hair. He was to farm his own land, and live a country life, and be of no profession; and he was to be pure Saxon, to counterbalance a little defect in Nelly's race; or rather, as she supposed, in her complexion, occasioned by the fact that her mother was of Spanish blood. Such was her ideal, as she had often confided to me. It was funny to see how this gigantic and glorious vision melted out of her mind. Llewellyn was not very tall; he was almost as dark as Nelly; he was a sailor, and he was a Welshman. What did it matter? One can change one's ideal so easily when one is under twenty. Perhaps in his imagination he had loved a milk-white maiden too.

Lady Denzil, however, watched, having, as I shall always believe, other intentions in her mind for Llewellyn, though she had no daughter of her own; and I am sure it was her influence which hurried him away the last day, without taking leave of any of us. She kept back the telegram which summoned him to join his ship, until there was just time to get the train. And so he had to rush away, taking off his hat to us, and almost getting out of the window of the carriage in his eagerness, when he saw us at the Admiral's door, as he dashed past to the station.

"Good-by, for the moment," he shouted; "I hope I am coming back." And I could see, by the colour in Nelly's cheek, that their eyes had met, and understood each other. Her sister bowed and smiled very graciously, and chattered about a hundred things.

"I wonder why he is going in such a hurry? I wonder what he means about coming back?" said Martha. "I am sure I am very sorry he is

gone. He was very nice, and always ready for anything. What a bore a ship is! I remember when papa was like that,—always rushing away. Don't you, Sister? but you were too young."

"I remember hearing people talk of it," said Nelly, with a sigh.

She was *rêveruse*, clouded over, everything that it was natural to be under the circumstances. She would not trust herself to say he was nice. It was I who had to answer, and keep up the conversation for her. For my own part, I confess I was vexed that he had gone so soon—that he was gone without an explanation. These things are far better to be settled out of hand. One goes away; but nobody can make sure how one may come back,—or what one may find when one comes back. I was sorry, for I knew a hundred things might happen to detain, or keep him silent; and Nelly's heart was caught, I could see. She had been quite unsuspecting, unfearing; and it was gone ere she understood what she was doing. My heart quaked a little for her; not with any fear of the result, but only with a certain throbbing of experience and anxiety that springs therefrom. Experience does not produce hope in the things of this world. It lays one's heart open to suspicions and fears which never trouble the innocent. It was not because of anything I had seen in Llewellyn; but because I had seen a great deal of the world, and things in general. This was why I kissed her with a little extra meaning, and told her to lie down on the sofa when she got home.

"You have not been looking your best for some days," I said. "You are not a giantess, nor so robust as you pretend to be. You must take care of yourself." And Nelly, though she made no reply, kissed me in her clinging way in return.

Some weeks passed after that without any particular incident. Things went on in their usual way, and though we were all sorry that Llewellyn was gone, we made no particular moan over him after the first. It was very rarely that a day passed on which I did not see the sisters; but the weather was beginning to get cold, and one Friday there was a fog which prevented me from going out. Ours is a low country, with a great many trees, and the river is not far off; and when there is a fog, it is very dreary and overwhelming. It closes in over the Green, so that you cannot see an inch before you; and the damp creeps into your very bones, though it was only the end of October, and the trees hung invisible over our heads in heavy masses, now and then dropping a faded leaf out of the fog in a ghostly, silent way: the chill went to one's heart. I had a new book, for which I was very thankful, and my fire burned brightly, and I did not stir out of doors all day. I confess it surprised me a little that the girls did not come in to me in the evening, as they had a way of doing, with their red cloaks round them, and the hoods over their heads, like Red Riding Hood. But I took it for granted they had some friends from town, or something pleasant on hand; though I had not heard any carriage driving up. As for seeing, that was impossible. Next morning, by a pleasant change, was bright, sunny, and frosty. For the first time that season, the hedges

and gardens, and even the green itself, was crisp and white with hoar-frost, which, of course, did not last, but gave us warning of winter. When I went out, I met Nelly just leaving her own door. She was in her red cloak, with her dress tucked up, and the little black hat with the red feather, which was always so becoming to her. But either it was not becoming that day, or there was something the matter with the child. I don't remember whether I have said that she had large eyes,—eyes that, when she was thinner than usual, or ill, looked out of proportion to the size of her face. They had this effect upon me that day. One did not seem to see Nelly at all; but only a big pair of wistful, soft eyes looking at one, with shadowy lines round them. I was alarmed, to tell the truth, whenever I saw her. Either something had happened, or the child was ill.

"Good-morning, my dear," I said; "I did not see you all yesterday, and it feels like a year. Were you coming to me now?"

"No," said Nelly—and even in the sound of her voice there was something changed—"it is so long since I have been in the village. I had settled to go down there this morning, and take poor Mary Jackson some warm socks we have been knitting for the babies. It is so cold to-day."

"I thought you never felt the cold," said I, as one does without thinking. "You are always as merry as a cricket in the winter weather, when we are all shivering. You know you never feel the cold."

"No," said Nelly again. "I suppose it is only the first chill"—and she gave me a strange little sick smile, and suddenly looked down and stooped to pick up something. I saw in a moment there was nothing to pick up. Could it be that there were tears in her eyes, which she wanted to hide? "But I must go now," she went on hurriedly. "Oh, no, don't think of coming with me; it is too cold, and I shall have to walk fast, I am in such a hurry. Good-by."

I could do nothing but stand and stare after her when she had gone on. What did it mean? Nelly was not given to taking fancies, or losing her temper—at least not in this way. She walked away so rapidly that she seemed to vanish out of my sight, and never once looked round or turned aside for anything. The surprise was so great that I actually forgot where I was going. It could not be for nothing that she had changed like this. I went back to my own door, and then I came out again and opened the Admiral's gate. Probably Martha was at home, and would know what was the matter. As I was going in, Martha met me coming out. She was in her red cloak, like Nelly, and she had a letter in her hand. When she saw me she laughed, and blushed a little. "Will you come with me to the post, Mrs. Mulgrave?" she said. "Sister would not wait for me; and when one has an important letter to post——" Martha went on, holding it up to me, and laughing and blushing again.

"What makes it so very important?" said I; and I confess that I tried very hard to make out the address.

"Oh, didn't she tell you?" said Martha. "What a funny girl she is! If it had been me I should have rushed all over the Green, and told everybody. It is—can't you guess?"

And she held out to me the letter in her hand. It was addressed to "Captain Llewellyn, H.M.S. *Spitfire*, Portsmouth." I looked at it, and I looked at her, and wonder took possession of me. The address was in Martha's handwriting. It was she who was going to post it; it was she who, conscious and triumphant, giggling a little and blushing a little, stood waiting for my congratulations. I looked at her aghast, and my tongue failed me. "I don't know what it means," I said, gasping. "I can't guess. Is it you who have been writing to Captain Llewellyn, or is it Nelly, or who is it? Can there have been any mistake?"

Martha was offended, as indeed she had reason to be. "There is no mistake," she said, indignantly. "It is a very strange sort of thing to say, when any friend, any acquaintance even, would have congratulated me. And you who know us so well! Captain Llewellyn has asked me to marry him—that is all. I thought you might have found out what was coming. But you have no eyes for anybody but Sister. You never think of me."

"I beg your pardon," said I, faltering; "I was so much taken by surprise. I am sure I wish you every happiness, Martha. Nobody can be more anxious for your welfare than I am—" and here I stopped short in my confusion, choked by the words, and not knowing what to say.

"Yes, I am sure of that," said Martha, affectionately, stopping at the gate to give me a kiss. "I said so to Sister this morning. I said I am sure Mrs. Mulgrave will be pleased. But are you *really* so much surprised? Did you never think this was how it was to be?"

"No," I said, trembling in spite of myself; "I never thought of it. I thought, indeed—but that makes no difference now."

"What did you think?" said Martha; and then her private sense of pride and pleasure surmounted everything else. "Well, you see it is so," she said, with a beaming smile. "He kept his own counsel, you see. I should not have thought he was so sly—should you? I daresay he thinks he showed it more than he did; for he says I must have seen how it was from the first day."

And she stood before me so beaming, so dimpling over with smiles and pleasure, that my heart sank within me. Could it be a mistake, or was it I—ah, how little it mattered for me—was it my poor Nelly who had been deceived?

"And did you?" I said, looking into her face, "did you see it from the first day?"

"Well, n-no," said Martha, hesitating; and then she resumed with a laugh, "That shows you how sly he must have been. I don't think I ever suspected such a thing; but then, to be sure, I never thought much about him, you know."

A little gleam of comfort came into my heart as she spoke. "Oh,

then," I said, relieved, "there is no occasion for congratulations after all."

"Why is there no occasion for congratulations?" said Martha. "Of course there is occasion. I wanted Sister to run in and tell you last night, but she wouldn't; and I rather wanted you to tell me what I should say, or, rather, how I should say it; but I managed it after all by myself. I suppose one always can, if one tries. It comes by nature, people say." And Martha laughed again, and blushed, and cast a proud glance on the letter she held in her hand.

"But if you never had thought of him yesterday," said I, "you can't have accepted him to-day."

"Why not?" said Martha, with a toss of her pretty head—and she was pretty, especially in that moment of excitement. I could not refuse to see it. It was a mere piece of pink and white prettiness, instead of my little nut-brown maid, with her soft eyes, and her bright varied gleams of feeling and intelligence. But then you can never calculate on what a man may think in respect to a girl. Men are such fools; I mean where women are concerned.

"Why not?" said Martha, with a laugh. "I don't mean I am frantically in love with him, you know. How could I be, when I never knew he cared for me? But I always said he was very nice; and then it is so suitable. And I don't care for anybody else. It would be very foolish of me to refuse him without any reason. Of course," said Martha, looking down upon her letter, "I shall think of him very differently now."

What could I say? I was at my wits' end. I walked on by her side to the post-office in a maze of confusion and doubt. I could have snatched the letter out of her hand, and torn it into a hundred pieces; but that would have done little good; and how could I tell if it was a mistake after all? He might have sought Nelly for her sister's sake. He might have been such a fool, such a dolt, as to prefer Martha. All this time he might but have been making his advances to her covertly—under shield as it were of the gay bright creature who was too young and too simple-hearted to understand such devices. Oh, my little nut-brown maid! no wonder her eyes were so large and shadowy, her pretty cheeks so colourless! I could have cried with vexation and despair as I went along step for step with the other on the quiet country road. Though she was so far from being bright, Martha at last was struck by my silence. It took her a considerable time to find it out, for naturally her own thoughts were many, and her mind was fully pre-occupied; but she did perceive it at last.

"I don't think you seem to like it, Mrs. Mulgrave," she said; "not so much as I thought you would. You were the very first person I thought of; I was coming to tell you when I met you. And I thought you would sympathize with me and be so pleased to hear——"

"My dear," said I, "I am pleased to hear—anything that is for your happiness; but then I am so much surprised. It was not what I looked

for. And then, good heavens, if it should turn out to be some mistake——”

“Mrs. Mulgrave,” said Martha, angrily, “I don’t know what you can mean. This is the second time you have talked of a mistake. What mistake could there be? I suppose Captain Llewellyn knows what he is doing; unless you want to be unkind and cross. And what have I done that you should be so disagreeable to me?”

“Oh, my dear child!” I cried in despair, “I don’t know what I mean; I thought once—there was Major Frost, you know——”

“Oh, is it that?” said Martha, restored to perfect good-humour; “poor Major Frost! But of course if he did not choose to come forward in time, he could not expect me to wait for him. You may make your mind quite easy if that is all.”

“And then,” I said, taking a little courage, “Captain Llewellyn paid Nelly a great deal of attention. He might have thought——”

“Yes,” said Martha, “to be sure; and I never once suspected that he meant it for me all the time.”

I ask anybody who is competent to judge, could I have said any more? I walked to the post-office with her, and I saw the letter put in. And an hour afterwards I saw the mail-cart rattling past with the bags, and knew it had set out to its destination. He would get it next morning, and the two lives would be bound for ever and ever. The wrong two?—or was it only we, Nelly and I, who had made the mistake? Had it been Martha he sought all the time?

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## CHAPTER II.

THE news soon became known to everybody on the Green, and great surprise was excited by it. Everybody, I think, spoke to me on the subject. They said, “If it had been the other sister!” Even Lady Denzil went so far as to say this, when, after having called at the Admiral’s to offer her congratulations, she came in to see me. “I do not pretend that I like the marriage,” she said, with a little solemnity. “There were claims upon him nearer home. It is not every man that is at liberty to choose for himself; but if it had been the little one I could have understood it.” I hope nobody spoke like this to Nelly; she kept up a great deal too well to satisfy me. She was in the very centre of all the flutter that such an event makes in a small society like ours, and she knew people were watching her; but she never betrayed herself. She had lost her colour somehow—everybody remarked that; and the proud little girl got up a succession of maladies, and said she had influenza and indigestion, and I know not what, that nobody might suspect any other cause. Sometimes I caught her for one instant off her guard, but it was a thing that happened very rarely. Two or three times I met her going off by herself for a long walk, and she would not have my company when I offered to go with her. “I walk so fast,” she said, “and then it is too

far for you." Once I even saw her in the spot to which all our walks tended—the Dingle, which was our favourite haunt. It was a glorious autumn, and the fine weather lasted long—much longer than usual. Up to the middle of November there were still masses of gorgeous foliage on the trees, and the sky was as blue—not as Italy, for Italy is soft and languorous and melting—but as an English sky without clouds, full of sunshine, yet clear, with a premonitory touch of frost, can be. The trees in the Dingle are no common trees; they are giant beeches, big-boled, heavily-clothed giants, that redden and crisp and hold their own until the latest moment; and that mount up upon heights, and descend into dollows, and open up here and there into gleams of the far plain around, growing misty in the distance as if it were sea. The great point in the landscape is a royal castle, the noblest dwelling-place I ever saw. We who live so near are learned in the different points of view; we know where to catch it shining like a fairy stronghold in the white hazy country, or stretching out in grey profile upon its height, or setting itself—here the great donjon, there a flanking tower—in frames of leafy branches. I had left my little carriage and my stout old pony on the road, and had wandered up alone to have my last peep before winter set in, when suddenly I saw Nelly before me. She was walking up and down on the soft yielding moss, carpeted with beech-mast and pine-needles; then she would stop and gaze blankly at the view,—at the great plain whitening off to the horizon, and the castle rising in the midst. I knew what the view was, but I saw also that she did not see it. Her face was all drawn together, small and shrunken up. There were deep shadowy lines round her eyes; and as for the eyes themselves, it was them and not Nelly that I saw. They were dilated, almost exaggerated, unlike anything I ever saw before. She had come out here to be alone, poor child! I crept away as best I could through the brown crackling ferns. If she heard anything; probably she thought it was some woodland creature that could not spy upon her. But I don't believe she heard anything, nor saw anything; and I was no spy upon her, dear heart!

The nearest we ever came to conversation on the subject was once when I was telling her about a girl I once knew, whose story had been a very sad one. She had pledged her heart and her life to a foolish young fellow, who was very fond of her, and then was very fond of somebody else; and would have been fond of her again, periodically, to any number of times. She had borne it as long as she could, and then she had broken down; and it had been a relief to her, poor girl, to come and cry her heart out to me.

"It has never been my way, Nelly," I said, "but it seems to ease the heart when it can speak. I don't think that I could have spoken to any one, had it been me."

"And as for me," cried Nelly, "if I should ever be like that—and if any one, even you, were so much as to look at me as if you knew, I think I should die!"

This was before the lamp was lighted; and in the dark, I think she put up a hand to wipe off something from her eyelash. But you may be sure I took care not to look. I tried to put all speculation out of my eyes whenever I looked at her afterwards. My poor Nelly! in the very extravagance of her pride was there not an appeal, and piteous throwing of herself upon my forbearance? I thought there was, and it went to my heart.

The next thing, of course, was that Llewellyn was coming to see his betrothed. He was to come at Christmas, not being able to leave his ship before. And then it was to be settled when the marriage should take place. I confess that I listened to all this with a very bad grace. Any reference to the marriage put me out of temper. He wrote to her regularly and very often, and Martha used to read his letters complacently before us all, and communicate little bits out of them, and spend half her mornings writing her replies. She was not a ready writer, and it really was hard work to her, and improved her education—at least, in the mechanical matters of writing and spelling. But I wonder what sort of rubbish it was she wrote to him, and what he thought of it. Was it possible he could suppose it was my Nelly who wrote him all those commonplaces? or, was the mistake on my part, not on his? As time went on, I came to think, more and more, that the latter was the case. We had been deceived, Nelly and I. And Martha and Llewellyn were two lovers worthy of each other. I fear I was not very charitable to him in my thoughts.

But I could not help being very nervous the day of his arrival. It was a bleak wintry day, Christmas Eve, but not what people call Christmas weather. It rarely is Christmas weather at Christmas. The sky hung low and leaden over our bare trees, and of course there were no cricketers now on the green, nor sound of croquet balls, to enliven the stillness. I could not rest at home. We had not been informed what train Captain Llewellyn was to come by, and my mind was in such a disturbed state, that I kept coming and going, all day long, on one errand or another, lingering about the road. I don't myself know what I meant by it; nor could I have explained it to anybody. Sometimes I thought, if I should meet him, I would speak, and make sure. Sometimes I fancied that I could read in his face, at the first look, what it all meant. But, anyhow, I did not meet him. I thought all the trains were in, when I went to the Admiral's in the afternoon, at five o'clock—that is, all the trains that could arrive before dinner, for we were two miles from the station. Martha and her father were in the drawing-room when I entered. There was a bright fire, but the candles were not lighted; I suppose, out of reluctance to shut up the house, and close all the windows, before the visitor came. Martha was sitting by the fire, looking very gay and bright, and a little excited. She told me Nelly had been all day in the church, helping with the decorations, and that she was to stay at the rectory for dinner, as there was a Christmas-tree for the school-children to be got ready. "I daresay she thought we should not want her this first

evening," Martha said, with a little laugh; and such was the bitterness and unreasonableness of my heart that I could have shaken her: which was nonsense, for, of course, she had a right to the society of her betrothed. While we were sitting chatting over the fire, all at once there came a sound of wheels, and the dog-cart from the little inn at Dinglefield station came rattling up. Martha gave a little cry, and ran to the drawing-room door. I know I should have gone away, but I did not. I stood behind in the ruddy gloom, and saw her rush into Llewellyn's arms. And he kissed her. And the next moment they were back in the room beside us, she chatting about his journey, and looking up in his face, and showing her satisfaction and delight, as it was quite natural she should do. It seemed to me that he did not make very much reply; but the room was dark, and his arrival was sudden, and there was a certain confusion about everything. The Admiral came forward, and shook hands with him, and so did I, and instead of looking as if he wished us a hundred miles off, Llewellyn kept peering into the corners, as if he wanted another greeting. Then he came to the fire, and stood before it, making the room all the darker with his shadow; and after we had all asked him if he had felt the cold on his journey, there did not seem very much to say. I don't know how the others felt, but I know my heart began to beat wildly. Martha was in an unnatural state of excitement. She drew a great comfortable easy-chair to the fire for him. "Dear Ellis, sit down," she said, laying her hand softly on his arm. The touch seemed to wake him up out of a kind of reverie. He took her hand, and held it for a moment, and then let it fall.

"You are far too kind," he said, "to take so much trouble for me. A thousand thanks. Where is—your sister? She knew I was to come by this train."

"No, I don't think Sister knew," said Martha; "that was my little secret. I would not tell them what train you were coming by. She is helping with the church decorations. She will see you to-morrow, you know. I wish they would bring the tea: papa, will you ring?—Oh, papa has gone away. Wait a minute, Ellis dear, and I will run and make them bring it immediately. It will warm you better than anything else. I shan't be a moment gone."

The moment she had left us poor Llewellyn turned to me. Notwithstanding the ruddy firelight, I could see he was quite haggard with the awful suspicion that must have flashed upon him. "Mrs. Mulgrave!" he cried hurriedly, holding out his hands, "for God's sake, tell me, what does this mean?"

"It means that you have come to see your betrothed, Captain Llewellyn," said I; "she has just gone out of the room. You made your choice, and I hope you did not expect to have both the sisters. Martha stayed to receive you, as was right and natural. You could not expect the same from Nelly. She thought neither of you would want a third to-night."

I was so angry that I said all this in a breath. I know I ought to be ashamed of myself, but I did it; I don't think, however, that he heard half. He covered his face with his hands, and gave a groan, which seemed to me to echo all through the house; and I had to add on to what I was saying, "Oh, for heaven's sake, restrain yourself," I cried, without even taking breath, "now it is too late!"

And then Martha came in, excited and joyous, half dancing with high spirits. I could have groaned too, and hid my face from the light, as he did, poor fellow; but she went up to him, and drew down his hands playfully, and said, "I am here, Ellis, you needn't cover your eyes." He did not answer her with a compliment or a caress, as perhaps she expected: and Martha looked at me where I was standing by the side of the fire. I knew she thought I was the restraining influence that closed his mouth and subdued his joy—and what could I do?—I went away: I could be of no use to him, poor boy. He must face it now as best he could. I went away, and as soon as I got safely into my own house, sat down and cried. Not that crying would do any good; but when everything is going wrong, and everybody is on the way to ruin, and you see how it is, and know how to mend it, and yet cannot, dare not, put forth a hand, what can any one do, but sit down and cry?

But I could not rest in my quiet, comfortable, lonely house, and know that those poor young hearts were being wrung, and keep quiet and take no notice. I had my cup of tea, and I put on my warm cloak and hood, and went across the green, though it was wet and slippery, to the school-room, where I knew Nelly would be. She was in the midst of a heap of toys and paper flags and little tapers, dressing up the Christmas-tree. There were three or four girls altogether, and Nelly was the busiest of all. Her little hands were pricked and scratched with the points of the holly, and the sharp needles of the little fir-tree on which she was working. Poor child, I wish it had been her hands only that were wounded. The others had gloves on, but Nelly had taken hers off, either because she found the pain of the pricks good for her, or because of some emblematical meaning in it. "I can't work in gloves," she said carelessly, "and it don't hurt so much when you are used to it." When I saw her I could not but think of the pictures of Indians tied to the stake, with arrows flying at them from all quarters. I am aware St. Sebastian was killed in the same way, —but I did not think of him.

"I wish you would come with me, Nelly," I said; "you know Christmas Eve is never very merry to me. There is no dinner, but you shall have something with your tea."

"I am going to the rectory," said Nelly. She did not venture to look at me, and she spoke very quick, with a kind of catch in her breath. "I promised,—and there is a great deal to do yet. When Christmas is not merry, it is best to try and forget it is Christmas. If I were to go with you, you would talk to me, and that would make you feel everything the more."

"I would not talk,—you may trust me, Nelly," I said eagerly. In my excitement I was for one minute off my guard.

She gave me one look, and then turned away, and began arranging the flags, and pricking her poor little soft fingers. "Talking does not matter to me," she said in her careless way. Her pride was something that filled me with consternation. She would not yield, not if she had been cut in little pieces. Her heart was being torn out of her very breast, and she was ready to look her executioners in the face, and cheer them on.

I don't know how they all got through that evening. Nelly, I know, went home late, and went to her own room at once, as being tired. It was poor Llewellyn that was the most to be pitied. I could not get him out of my mind. I sat, and thought and thought over it, till I could scarcely rest. Would he have the courage to emancipate himself and tell the truth? or would the dreadful coil of circumstances in which he had got involved, overcome him and subdue his spirit? I asked myself this question till it made me sick and faint. How was he to turn upon the girl who was hanging on him so proud and pleased and confident, and say that he had never cared for her, and never sought her? There are men who would have the nerve to do that; but my poor simple tender-hearted sailor—who would not hurt a fly, and who had no warning nor preparation for the fate that was coming on him—I could not hope that he would be so brave.

I saw by my first glance next morning at church, that he had not been brave. He was seated by Martha's side, looking pale, and haggard, and stern; such a contrast to her lively and demonstrative happiness. Nelly was at the other end of the pew, under her father's shadow. I don't know what she had done to herself,—either it was excitement, or in her pride she had had recourse to artificial aids. She had recovered her colour as if by a miracle. I am afraid that I did not pay so much attention to the service as I ought to have done. My whole thoughts were bent upon the Admiral's seat, where there were two people quite serene and comfortable, and two in the depths of misery and despair. There were moments when I felt as if I could have got up in church and protested against it in the sight of God. One feels as if one could do that: but one keeps still, and does nothing all the same.

In the afternoon, Llewellyn came to see me. He would have done it anyhow, I feel sure, for he had a good heart. But there was a stronger reason still that Christmas Day. He did not say much to me when he came. He walked about my drawing-room, and looked at all the ornaments on the tables, and opened the books, and examined my Christmas presents. Then he came and sat down beside me before the fire. He tried to talk, and then he broke off, and leant his face between his hands. It was again a grey, dark, sunless day; and it was all the darker in my room because of the verandah over the windows, which made it so pleasant in summer. I could see his profile darkly before me as he made an attempt at conversation, not looking at me, but staring into the fire; and

then, all at once, his shoulders went up, and his face disappeared in the shadow of his hands. He stared into the fire, still under that shelter; but he felt himself safe from my inspection, poor fellow.

"I ought to beg your pardon," he said, suddenly concentrating all his attention upon the glowing embers, "for speaking as I did—last night——"

"There was nothing to pardon," said I. And then we came to an embarrassed pause, for I did not know which was best—to speak, or to be silent.

"I know I was very abrupt," he said. "I was rude. I hope you will forgive me. It was the surprise." And then he gave vent to something between a cry and a groan. "What is to become of us all, good God!" he muttered. It was all I could do to hear him, and the exclamation did not sound to me profane.

"Captain Llewellyn," I said, "I don't know whether I ought to say anything, or whether I should hold my tongue. I understand it all; and I feel for you with all my heart."

"It doesn't matter," he said; "it doesn't matter. Feeling is of no use. But there is one thing you could tell me. She—you know—I can't call her by any name—I don't seem to know her name:—Just tell me one thing, and I'll try and bear it. Did she mind? Does she think me——? Good heavens! what does it matter what any one thinks? If you are sure it did not hurt her, I—don't mind."

"N—no," said I; but I don't think he got any comfort from my tone. "You may be sure it will not hurt her," I went on, summoning up all my pride. "She is not the sort of girl to let it hurt her." I spoke indignantly, for I did not know what was coming. He seized my hand, poor boy, and wrung it till I could have screamed; and then he broke down, as a man does when he has come to the last point of wretchedness: two or three hoarse sobs burst from him. "God bless her!" he cried.

I was wound up to such a pitch that I could not sit still. I got up and grasped his shoulder. In my excitement, I did not know what I was doing.

"Are you going to bear it?" I said. "Do you mean to let it go on? It is a lie; and are you going to set it up for the truth? Oh, Captain Llewellyn! is it possible that you mean to let it go on?"

Then he gave me one sorrowful look, and shook his head. "I have accepted it," he said. "It is too late. You said so last night."

I knew I had said so; but things somehow looked different now. "I would speak to Martha herself," said I. And I saw he shuddered at her name. "I would speak to her father. The Admiral is sensible and kind. He will know what to do."

"He will think I mean to insult them," said Llewellyn, shaking his head. "I have done harm enough. How was I to know? But never mind—never mind. It is my own doing, and I must bear it." Then he

rose up suddenly, and turned to me with a wan kind of smile. "I cannot afford to indulge myself with talk," he said. "Good-by, and thanks. I don't feel as if I cared much now what happened. The only thing is, I can't stay here."

"But you must stay a week—you must stay over Christmas," I cried, as he stood holding my hand.

"Yes," he said, with a sigh. "I must get through to-night. If you'd keep her out of the way, Mrs. Mulgrave, it would be the kindest thing you could do. I can't look at her. It kills me. But I'll be summoned by telegram to-morrow," he added, with a kind of desperate satisfaction. "I wrote this morning." And then he shook hands with me hurriedly, and went away.

I had very little trouble to keep Nelly—poor Nelly!—out of his way. She made me go upstairs with her, after dinner (I always dined there on Christmas), to show me the presents she had got, and the things she had prepared for her pensioners in the village. We made a great pet of the village, we people who lived on the green, and, I fear, rather spoiled it. There were things for the babies, and things for the old women, which were to be bestowed next day when they all came to the schoolroom for the Christmas-tree. She never mentioned Llewellyn to me, nor Martha, nor referred to the domestic event which, in other circumstances, would have occupied her mind above all. I almost wonder it did not occur to her that to speak of, and show an interest in, her sister's engagement was a quite necessary part of her own self-defence. Either it was too much, and she could not, or it did not enter into her mind. She never took any notice of it, at least to me. She never so much as mentioned his name. They never looked at each other, nor addressed each other, though I could see that every look and movement of one was visible to the other. Nelly kept me upstairs until it was time for me to go home. She came running out with me, with her red cloak round her, when the Admiral marched to the gate to see me home, as he made a rule of doing. She stood at the gate, in the foggy, wintry darkness, to wait for him until he came back from my door. And I waited on my own threshold, and saw them going back—Nelly, poor child, clinging fast to her father's arm. My heart ached; and yet not so much even for her as for the other. What was he doing indoors, left alone with the girl he was engaged to, and did not love?

Next morning, to the astonishment and dismay of everybody but myself, Captain Llewellyn was summoned back to his ship by telegraph. Martha was more excited about it than I should have supposed possible. It was so hard upon poor dear Ellis, she said, before they had been able to arrange anything, or even to talk of anything. She had not the slightest doubt of him. His wretched looks, and his hesitation and coldness, had taught nothing to Martha. If she was, perhaps, disappointed at first by his want of ardour, the disappointment had soon passed. It was his way; he was not the sort of man to make a fuss. By this means she quite

accounted for it to herself. For my own part, I cannot say that I was satisfied with his conduct. If he had put a stop to it boldly—if he had said at once it was all a mistake—then, whatever had come of it, I could have supported and sympathized with him; but it made an end of Captain Llewellyn, as a man, in my estimation when he thus ran away. I was vexed, and I was sorry; and yet I cannot say I was surprised.

He wrote afterwards to say it was important business, and that he had no hope of being able to come back. And then he wrote that he had been transferred to another ship just put into commission, and had to sail at once. He could not even come to wish his betrothed good-by. He assured her it could not be for long, as their orders were only for the Mediterranean; but it was a curious reversal of all their former ideas. "He must retire," Martha said, when she had told me this news with tears. "The idea of a man with a good property of his own being ordered about like this! Papa says things have changed since his days; he never heard of anything so arbitrary. After all he said about our marriage taking place first, to think that he shall have to go away now, without a moment to say good-by!"

And she cried and dried her eyes, while I sat by and felt myself a conspirator, and was very uncomfortable. Nelly was present too. She sat working in the window, with her head turned away from us, and took no part in the conversation. Perhaps it was a relief; perhaps—and this was what she herself thought—it would have been better to have got it over at once. Anyhow, at this present juncture, she sat apart, and took no apparent notice of what we said.

"And Nelly never says a word," sobbed Martha. "She has no sympathy. I think she hates poor dear Ellis. She scarcely looked at him when he was here. And she won't say she is sorry now."

"When everybody is sorry, what does it matter if I say it or not?" said Nelly, casting one rapid glance from her work. She never was so fond of her work before. Now, she had become all at once a model girl: she never was idle for a moment; one kind of occupation or another was constantly in her hands. She sat at her knitting, while Martha, disappointed and vexed, cried and folded up her letter. I don't know whether an inkling of the truth had come to Nelly's mind. Sometimes I thought so. When the time approached which Llewellyn had indicated as the probable period of his return, she herself proposed that she should go on a visit to her godmother, in Devonshire. It was spring then, and she had a cough; and there were very good reasons why she should go. The only one that opposed it was Martha. "It will look so unkind to dear Ellis," she said; "as if you would rather not meet him. At Christmas you were out all the time. And if she dislikes him, Mrs. Mulgrave, she ought to try to get over it. Don't you think so? It is unkind to go away."

"She does not dislike him," said I. "But she wants a change, my dear." And so we all said. The Admiral, good man, did not understand it at all. He saw that something was wrong. "There is something on

the little one's mind," he said to me. "I hoped she would have taken you into her confidence. I can't tell what is wrong with her, for my part."

"She wants a change," said I. "She has never said anything to me."

It was quite true; she had never said a word to me. I might have betrayed Llewellyn, but I could not betray Nelly. She had kept her own counsel. While the Admiral was talking to me, I cannot describe how strong the temptation was upon me to tell him all the story. But I dared not. It was a thing from which the boldest might have shrunk. And though everybody on the Green had begun to wonder vaguely, and the Admiral himself was a little uneasy, Martha never suspected anything amiss. She cried a little when "poor Ellis" wrote to say his return was again postponed; but it was for his disappointment she cried. Half-an-hour after she was quite serene and cheerful again, looking forward to the time when he should arrive eventually. "For he must come some time, you know; they can't keep him away for ever," she said; until one did not know whether to be impatient with her serenity, or touched by it, and would not make up one's mind whether it was stupidity or faith.

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### CHAPTER III.

NELLY paid her visit to her godmother, and came back; and spring wore into summer, and the trees were all in full foliage again in the Dingle, and the cricketers had returned to the Green; but still Captain Llewellyn was unaccountably detained. Nelly had come home looking much better than when she went away. His name still disturbed her composure I could see; though I don't suppose a stranger who knew nothing of the circumstances would have found it out. And when Martha threatened us with a visit from him, her sister shrank up into herself; but otherwise Nelly was much improved. She recovered her cheerful ways; she became the soul of all our friendly parties again. I said to myself that I had been a truer prophet than I had the least hope of; and that she was not the sort of girl to let herself be crushed in any such way. But she never spoke to me of her sister's marriage, nor of her sister's betrothed. I mentioned the matter one day when we were alone, cruelly and of set purpose to see what she would say. "When your sister is married, and when you are married," I said, "it will be very dull both for the Admiral and me."

"I shall never marry," said Nelly, with a sudden closing up and veiling of all her brightness which was more expressive than words. "I don't know about Sister; but you need not weave any such visions for me."

"All girls say so till their time comes," said I, with an attempt to be playful; "but why do you say you don't know about Martha? she must be married before long, of course?"

"I suppose so," said Nelly, and then she stopped short; she would not add another word; but afterwards, when we were all together, she

broke out suddenly. Martha's conversation at this period was very much occupied with her marriage. I suppose it was quite natural. In my young days girls were shy of talking much on that subject, but things are changed now. Martha talked of it continually: of when dear Ellis could come; of his probable desire that the wedding should take place at once; of her determination to have two months at least to prepare her trousseau; of where they would go after the marriage. She discussed everything, without the smallest idea, poor girl, of what was passing in the minds of the listeners. At last, after hearing a great deal of this for a long time, Nelly suddenly burst forth,—

"How strange it would be after all, if we were to turn out a couple of old maids," she cried, "and never to marry at all. The two old sisters! with chairs on each side of the fire, and great authorities in the village. How droll it would be!—and not so very unlikely after all."

"Speak for yourself," cried Martha, indignantly. "It is very unlikely so far as I am concerned. I am as good as married already. As for you, you can do what you please——"

"Yes, I can do what I please," said Nelly, with a curious ring in her voice; and then she added, "But I should not wonder if we were both old maids after all."

"She is very queer," Martha said to me when her sister had left the room, in an aggrieved tone. "She does not mean it, of course; but I don't like it, Mrs. Mulgrave. It does not seem lucky. Why should she take it into her head about our being old maids? I am as good as married now."

"Yes," I said, vaguely. I could not give any assent more cordial. And then she resumed her anticipations. But I saw in a moment what Nelly meant. This was how she thought it was to end. It was a romantic girl's notion, but happily she was too young to think how unlikely it was. No doubt she saw a vision of the two maiden sisters, and of one who would be their devoted friend, but who could never marry either. That was the explanation she had put in her heart upon his abrupt departure and his many delays. He had made a fatal mistake, and its consequences were to last all his life. They were all three, all their lives long, to continue in the same mind. He could never marry either of them; and neither of them, none of the three, were ever to be tempted to marry another. And thus, in a pathetic climax of faithfulness and delicate self-sacrifice, they were to grow old and die. Nelly was no longer miserable when she had framed this ideal in her mind. It seemed to her the most natural solution of the difficulty. The romance, instead of ending in a prosaic marriage, was to last all their lives. And the eldest of them, Llewellyn himself, was but seven-and-twenty! Poor Nelly thought it the most likely thing in the world.

If she had consulted me, I could have told her of something much more likely—something which very soon dawned upon the minds of most people at Dinglefield Green. It was that a certain regiment had come

back to the barracks which were not very far from our neighbourhood. Before Captain Llewellyn made his appearance among us, there had been a Major Frost who "paid attention" to Martha; and he did not seem at all disinclined to pay attention to her now that he had come back. Though he was told of her engagement, the information seemed to have very little effect upon him. He came over perpetually, and was always at hand to ride or walk, or drive, or flirt, as the young ladies felt disposed. Before he had been back a fortnight it seemed to me that Martha had begun to talk less about dear Ellis. By degrees she came the length of confessing that dear Ellis wrote very seldom. I had found out that fact for myself, but she had never made any reference to it before. I watched her with an interest which surpassed every other interest in my life at that moment. I forgot even Nelly, and took no notice of her in comparison. The elder sister absorbed me altogether. By degrees she gave up talking of her marriage, and of her wedding-dress, and where they were to live; and she began to talk of Major Frost. He seemed always to be telling her something which she had to repeat; and he told her very private details, with which she could have nothing to do. He told her that he was much better off than when he was last at the Green. Somebody had died and had left him a great deal of money. He was thinking of leaving the army, and buying a place in our county, if possible. He asked Martha's advice where he should go. "It is odd that he should tell you all this," I said to her one day, when she was re-confiding to me a great many of Major Frost's personal affairs; and though she was not usually very quick of apprehension, something called upon Martha's cheek the shadow of a blush.

"I think it is quite natural," she said; "we are such old friends; and then he knows I am engaged. I always thought he was very nice—didn't you? I don't think he will ever marry," Martha added, with a certain pathos. "He says he could never have married but one woman; and he can't have her now. He was poor when he was last here, you know."

"And who was the woman he could have married?" said I.

"Oh, of course I did not ask him," said Martha, with modest consciousness. "Poor fellow! it would have been cruel to ask him. It is hard that he should have got his money just after I—I mean after she was engaged."

"It is hard that money should always be at the bottom of everything," said I. And though it was the wish nearest to my heart that Martha should forget and give up Llewellyn, still I was angry with her for what she said. But that made no difference. She was not bright enough to know that her faith was wavering. She went on walking and talking with Major Frost, and boring us all with him and his confidences, till I, for one, was sick of his very name. But she meant no treachery; she never even thought of deserting her betrothed. Had any accident happened to bring him uppermost, she would have gone back to dear Ellis all the same. She was not faithless nor fickle, nor anything that was wicked; she was

chiefly stupid, or rather, stolid. And to think the two were sisters! The Admiral was not very quick-sighted, but evidently he had begun to notice how things were going. He came to me one afternoon to consult me when both the girls were out. I suppose they were at croquet somewhere. We elders found that afternoon hour, when they were busy with the balls and mallets, a very handy time for consulting about anything which they were not intended to know.

"I think I ought to write to Llewellyn," he said. "Things are in a very unsatisfactory state. I am not satisfied that he was obliged to go away as he said. I think he might have come to see her had he tried. I have been consulting the little one about it, and she thinks with me."

"What does she think?" I asked, with breathless interest, to the Admiral's surprise.

"She thinks with me, that things are in an unsatisfactory state," he said, calmly; "that it would be far better to have it settled and over, one way or another. She is a very sensible little woman. I was just about to write to Llewellyn; but I thought it best to ask you first, what your opinion was."

Should I speak and tell him all? Had I any right to tell him? The thought passed through my mind quick as lightning. I made a longer pause than I ought to have done. And then all I could find to say was,—

"I think I should let things take their chance if I were you."

"What does that mean," said the Admiral, quickly. "Take their chance! I think it is my duty to write to him, and let things be settled out of hand."

It was with this intention he left me. But he did not write; for the very next morning there came a letter from Llewellyn, not to Martha, but to her father, telling him that he was coming home. The ship had been paid off quite unexpectedly, I heard afterwards. And I suppose that, unless he had been courageous enough to give the true explanation of his conduct, he had no resource but to come back. It was a curious, abrupt sort of letter. The young man's conscience, I think, had pricked him for his cowardice in running away; and either he had wound himself up to the point of carrying out his engagement in desperation, or else he was coming to tell his story, and ask for his release. I heard of it immediately from the Admiral himself, who was evidently not quite at ease in his mind on the subject. And a short time afterwards Martha came in, dragging her sister with her, full of the news.

"I could scarcely get her to come," Martha said. "I can't think what she always wants running after those village people. And when we have just got the news that Ellis is coming home!"

"Yes, I heard," said I. "I suppose I ought to congratulate you. Do you expect him soon? Does he say anything about——?"

"Oh, his letter was to papa," said Martha, interrupting my very hesitating and embarrassed speech; for my eyes were on Nelly, and I saw in a moment that her whole expression had changed. "He could not be

expected to say anything particular to papa; but I suppose it must be very soon. I don't think he will want to wait now he is free."

"I shall be very glad when it is all over," said Nelly, to my great surprise. It was the first time I had heard her make any comment on the subject. "It will make so much fuss and worry. It is very entertaining to them, I suppose, but it is rather tiresome to us. Mrs. Mulgrave, I am going to see Molly Jackson; I can hear all about the trousseau at home, you know."

"Nelly!" said I, as I kissed her; and I could not restrain a warning look. She flushed up, poor child, to her hair, but turned away with a sick impatience that went to my heart.

"If you had the worry of it night and day, as I shall have!" she said, under her breath, with an impatient sigh. And then she went away.

I knew all that was in her mind, as well as if she had told me. She had lost her temper and patience as well as her peace of mind. It is hard to keep serene under a repeated pressure. She did it the first time; but she was not equal to it the second. She had no excuse to go away now. She had to look forward to everything, and hear it all discussed, and go through in anticipation. She had to receive him as his future sister; to be the witness of everything, always on the spot; a part of the bridal pageant, the first and closest spectator. And it was very hard to bear. As for Martha, she sat serene in a chair which she had herself worked for me, turning her fair countenance to the light. She saw nothing strange in Nelly's temper, nor in anything that happened to her. She sat waiting till I had taken my seat again, quite ready to go into the question of the trousseau. The sight of her placidity made me desperate. Suddenly there came before me the haggard looks of poor Llewellyn, and the pale exasperation and heart-sickness of my bright little Nelly's face. And then I looked at Martha, who was sitting, serene and cheerful, just in the same spot and the same attitude in which, a few days before, she had told me of Major Frost. She had left off Major Frost now, and come back to her trousseau. What did it matter to her which of them it was! As for giving her pain, or humiliating her, how much or how long would she feel it? I became desperate. I fastened the door when I closed it after Nelly, that nobody might interrupt us; and then I came and sat down opposite to my victim. Martha was utterly unconscious still. It never occurred to her to notice how people were looking, nor to guess what was in anybody's mind.

"You are quite pleased," said I, making my first assault very gently, "that Captain Llewellyn is coming home?"

"Pleased!" said Martha. "Of course I am pleased. What odd people you all are! Anybody might see that it is pleasanter to be settled, and know what one is doing. I wish you would come up to town with me some day, Mrs. Mulgrave, and help me with Elise."

"My dear," said I, "in the first place, there is something more important than Elise; there is Major Frost. What do you mean to do with him?"

"I?" said Martha, opening her eyes. "He always knew I was engaged. Of course I am very sorry for him; but if he did not choose to come forward in time, he could not expect that one was to wait."

"And is that how you mean to leave him," said I, severely, "after all the encouragement you have given him? Every day, for a month past, I have expected to hear you say that you had made a mistake about Captain Llewellyn, and that it was the Major you liked best."

"Oh, fancy *me* doing such a thing!" cried Martha, really roused, "after being engaged to Ellis a whole year. If he had come forward at the proper time, perhaps—— But to make a change when everything was settled. You never could have believed it of *me*!"

"If you like the other better, it is never too late to make a change," said I, carried away by my motive, which was good, and justified a little stretch of ethics. "You will be doing a dreadful injury to poor Captain Llewellyn if you marry him, and like another man best."

Martha looked at me with a little simper of self-satisfaction. "I think I know my duty," she said. "I am engaged. I don't see that anything else is of any consequence. Of course the gentleman I am engaged to is the one I shall like best."

"Do you mean that you are engaged to him because you like him best?" said I. "Martha, take care. You may be preparing great bitterness for yourself. I have no motive but your good." This was not true, but still it is a thing that everybody says; and I was so much excited that I had to stop to take breath. "You may never have it in your power to make a choice again," I said, with solemnity. "You ought to pause and think seriously which of the two you love. You cannot love them both. It is the most serious question you will ever have to settle in your life."

Martha looked at me with a calm surprise which drove me wild. "Dear Mrs. Mulgrave," she said, "I don't know what you mean. I am engaged to Ellis—and Major Frost has never proposed even. He may have been only flirting, for anything I can tell; and how foolish it would be to give up the one without any real hold on the other! but of course it is nonsense altogether. Why, Ellis is coming back on purpose; and as Major Frost did not come forward in time, I don't see how he can complain."

All this she said with the most perfect placidity, sitting opposite the window, lifting her serene countenance to the light. It was a practical concern to Martha. It did not so much matter which it was; but to interfere with a thing fully arranged and settled, because of any mere question of liking! I was not by a very long way so cool as she was. Everything seemed to me to depend upon this last throw, and I felt myself suddenly bold to put it to the touch. It was not my business, to be sure; but to think of those two young creatures torn asunder and made miserable! It was not even Nelly I was thinking of. Nelly would be free; she was young; she would not have her heartbreak always kept

before her, and time would heal her wounds. But poor Llewellyn was bound and fettered. He could not escape nor forget. It was for him I made my last attempt.

"Martha, I have something still more serious to say to you," I said. "Do you remember, when you told me of Captain Llewellyn's proposal first, I asked you if it was not a mistake?"

"Yes, I remember very well," said Martha. "It was just like you. I never knew any one who asked such odd questions. I should have been angry had it been any one but you."

"Perhaps you will be angry now," I said. "I know you will be vexed, but I can't help it. Oh, my dear, you must listen to me! It is not only your happiness that is concerned, but that of others. Martha, I have every reason to think that it was a mistake. Don't smile; I am in earnest. It was a mistake. Can't you see yourself how little heart he puts into it? Martha, my dear, it is no slight to you. You told me you had never thought of him before he wrote to you. And it was not you he meant to write to. What can I say to convince you? It is true; it is not merely my idea. It was all a mistake."

"Mrs. Mulgrave," said Martha, a little moved out of her composure, "I am not angry. I might be; but I am sure you don't mean it. It is one of the fancies you take into your head. How could it be a mistake? It was me he wrote to, not anybody else. Of course I was not fond of him before; but when a man asks you to marry him, how is it possible there can be any mistake?"

"Oh, Martha," I said, wringing my hands, "let me tell you all; only hear me, and don't be vexed. Did you never notice all that summer how he followed Nelly about? Try and remember. He was always by her side; wherever we went those two were together. Ask anybody; ask Lady Denzil; ask your father. Oh, my dear child, I don't want to hurt your feelings! I want to save you from something you will be very sorry for. I want you to be happy. Can't you see what I mean without any more explanations from me?"

Martha had, notwithstanding her composure, grown pale. Her placid looks had changed a little. "I see it is something about Sister," she said. "Because you like her best, you think everybody else must like her best too. I wonder why it is that you are so unkind to me!"

As she spoke, she cried a little, and turned her shoulder towards me, instead of her face.

"Not unkind," I said, "oh, not unkind! I am speaking only because I love you all."

"You have never loved me," said Martha, weeping freely; "never, though I have been so fond of you. And now you want to make me ridiculous and miserable. How can I tell what you mean? What has Sister to do with it? Ellis was civil to her for—for my sake. It was me he proposed to. How can I tell what you are all plotting in your hearts?"

When people write letters to me, and ask me to marry them, am I not to believe what they say?"

"When he wrote, he thought Nelly was the eldest," I said. "You know what I have always told you about your names. He wrote to her, and it came to you. Martha, believe me, it is not one of my fancies; it is true."

"How do you know it is true?" she cried, with a natural outburst of anger and indignation. "How do you dare to come and say all this now? Insulting Ellis, and Sister, and me. Oh, I wish I had never known you! I wish I had never, never, come into this house! I wish——"

Her voice died away in a storm of sobs and tears. She cried like a child—as a baby cries, violently, with temper, and not with grief. She was not capable of Nelly's suppressed passion and misery; neither did the blow strike deep enough for that; and she had no pride to restrain her. She cried noisily, turning her shoulder to me, making her eyes red and her cheeks blurred. When I got up and went to her, she repulsed me; I had nothing to do but sit down again, and wait till the passion had worn itself out. And there she sat sobbing, crushing her pretty hat, and disfiguring her pretty face, with the bright light falling upon her, and revealing every heave of her shoulders. By degrees the paroxysm subsided; she dried her eyes, poor child, and put up her hair, which had got into disorder, with hasty and agitated hands. Then she turned her flushed tear-stained face upon me. It was almost prettier than usual in this childish passion.

"I don't believe you," she cried. "I don't believe it one bit! You only want to vex me. Oh, I wish I had never known you. I wish I might never see you again,—you, and—all the rest! I wish I was dead! But I shall tell papa, Mrs. Mulgrave, and I know what he will think of you."

"Martha, I am very sorry—" I began, but Martha had rushed to the door.

"I don't want to hear any more!" she said. "I know everything you can say. You are fond of Sister, and want her to have everything. And you always hated me!"

With these words she rushed out, shutting not only the door of the room behind her in her wrath, but the door of the house, which stood always open. She left me, I avow, in a state of very great agitation. I had not expected her to take it in this way. And it had been a great strain upon my nerves to speak at all. I trembled all over, and as soon as she was gone I cried too, from mere nervousness and agitation, not to speak of the terrible thought that weighed on my mind—had I done harm or good? What would the others say if they knew? Would they bless or curse me? Had I interfered out of season? Had I been officious? Heaven knows! The result only could show.

Most people know what a strange feeling it is when one has thus estranged, or parted in anger from, a daily and intimate companion; how

one sits in a vague fever of excitement, thinking it over—wondering what else one could have said; wondering if the offended friend will come or send, or give any sign of reconciliation; wondering what one ought to do. I was so shaken by it altogether that I was good for nothing but lying down on the sofa. When my maid came to look for me, she was utterly dismayed by my appearance. "Them young ladies are too much for you, ma'am," she said, indignantly. "It's as bad as daughters of your own." I think that little speech was the last touch that was wanted to make me break down. As bad as daughters of my own, but not as good; very different. When I thought how those girls would cling round their father, it was more than I could bear. Not that I envied him. But I was ready to do more for them than he was; to risk their very love, in order to serve them; and how different was their affection for me.

All day long I stayed indoors, recovering slowly, but feeling very miserable. Nobody came near me. The girls, who were generally flitting out and in twenty times in a day, never appeared again. The very door which Martha shut in her passion remained closed all day. When it came to be evening, I could bear it no longer; I could not let the sun go down upon such a quarrel; I was so lonely I could not afford to be proud. I drew my shawl round me, though I was still trembling, and went softly in at the Admiral's gate. It was dusk, and everything was very sweet. It had been a lovely autumn day, very warm for the season, and the twilight lingered as if it was loth to make an end of it. I thought the girls would probably be in the drawing-room by themselves, and that I might invent some excuse for sending Nelly away, and try to make my peace with her sister. I did not love Martha as I loved Nelly, but I was fond of her all the same, as one is fond of a girl one has seen grow up, and watched over every day; and I could not bear that she should be estranged from me. When I went in, however, Nelly was all alone in the drawing-room. She was sitting in a low chair by the fire, for they always had a fire earlier than other people. She was sitting over it, with her face resting in her hands, almost crouching towards the friendly blaze. And yet it was a warm evening, very warm for the time of the year. She started when she heard my step, and turned round, and for the moment I saw that I was not welcome to Nelly either. Her thoughts had been better company, or was it possible that Martha could have told her? I did not think, however, that this could be the case, when she drew forward my favourite chair for me, and we began to talk. Nelly had not passed through any crisis such as that which Martha and I had made for ourselves. She told me her sister had a headache, and had been lying down before dinner, but that now she had gone out for a little air.

"Only in the garden," Nelly said. And then she added, "Major Frost is here. He is with her—and I don't think he ought to come so often—now—"

"Major Frost!" I said, and my heart began to beat; I don't know what I feared or hoped, for at this moment the Admiral came in from

the dining-room, and joined us, and we got into ordinary conversation. What a strange thing ordinary conversation is! We sat in the dark, with only the firelight making rosy gleams about the room, and wavering in the great mirror over the mantelpiece, where we were all dimly reflected—and talked about every sort of indifferent subject. But I wonder if Nelly was thinking of what she was saying? or if her heart was away, like mine, hovering over the heads of these two in the garden, or with poor Llewellyn who was creeping home an unwilling bridegroom? Even the Admiral, I believe, had something on his mind different from all our chit-chat. For my own part I sat well back in my corner, with my heart thumping so against my breast that it affected my breathing. I had to speak in gasps, making up the shortest sentences I could think of. And we talked about public affairs, and what was likely to be the result of the new measures; and the Admiral, who was a man of the old school, shook his head, and declared I was a great deal too much of an optimist, and thought more hopefully than reasonably of the national affairs. Heaven help me! I was thinking of nothing at that moment but of Martha and Major Frost.

Then there was a little stir outside in the hall. The firelight, and the darkness, and the suspense, and my own feelings generally, recalled to my mind so strongly the evening on which Llewellyn arrived, that I should not have been surprised had he walked in when the door opened. But it was only Martha who came in. The firelight caught her as she entered, and showed me for one brief moment a different creature from the Martha I had parted with that morning in sobs and storms. I don't know what she wore; but I know that she was more elaborately dressed than usual, and had sparkling ornaments about her, which caught the light. I almost think, though I never could be sure, that it was her poor mother's diamond brooch which she had put on, though they were alone. She came in lightly, with something of the triumphant air I had noticed in her a year ago, before Captain Llewellyn's Christmas visit. It was evident, at all events, that my remonstrance had not broken her spirit. I could see her give a little glance to my corner, and I know that she saw I was there.

"Are you here, papa?" she said. "You always sit, like crows, in the dark, and nobody can see you." Then she drew a chair into the circle. She took no notice of me or any one, but placed herself directly in the light of the fire.

"Yes, my dear," said her father. "I am glad you have come in. It begins to get cold."

"We did not feel it cold," said Martha, and then she laughed,—a short little disconnected laugh, which indicated some disturbance of her calm; then she went on, with a tendency to short and broken sentences, like myself. "Papa," she said, "I may as well tell you at once. When the Major was here last, he was poor, and could not speak,—now he's well off. And he wants me to marry him. I like him better than—Ellis Llewellyn. I always,—liked him better,—and he loves me!"

Upon which Martha burst into tears.

If I were to try to describe the consternation produced by this unlooked-for speech, I should only prolong my story without making it more clear. The want of light heightened it, and confused us all doubly. If a bomb had burst in the peaceful place I don't think it could have produced a greater commotion. It was only the Admiral, however, who could say a word, and of course he was the proper person. Martha very soon came out of her tears to reply to him. He was angry, he was bewildered, he was wild for the moment. What was he to say to Llewellyn? What did she mean? How did Major Frost dare—? I confess that I was crying in my corner,—I could not help it. When the Admiral began to storm, I put my hand on his arm, and made him come to me, and whispered a word in his ear. Then the good man subsided into a bewildered silence. And after a while he went to the library, where Major Frost was waiting to know his fate.

It is unnecessary to follow out the story further. Llewellyn, poor fellow, had to wait a long time after all before Nelly would look at him. I never knew such a proud little creature. And she never would own to me that any spark of human feeling had been in her during that painful year. They were a proud family altogether. Martha met me ever after with her old affectionateness and composure,—never asked pardon, nor said I was right, but at the same time never resented nor betrayed my interference. I believe she forgot it even, with the happy faculty that belonged to her nature, and has not an idea now that it was anything but the influence of love and preference, which made her cast off Llewellyn and choose Major Frost.

Sometimes, however, in the grey of the summer evenings, or the long, long winter nights, I think I might just as well have let things alone. There are two bright households the more in the world, no doubt. But the Admiral and I are both dull enough sometimes, now the girls are gone. He comes and sits with me, which is always company, and it is not his fault I have not changed my residence and my lonely condition. But I say to him, why should we change? and give the world occasion to laugh, and make a talk of us, at our age? Things are very well as they are. I believe we are better company to each other living next door, than if we were more closely allied; and our neighbours know us too well to make any talk about our friendship. But still it often happens, even when we are together,—in the still evenings, and in the firelight, and when all the world is abroad of summer nights,—that we both of us lament a little in the silence, and feel that it is very dull without the girls.

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## Anarchy and Authority.

(CONTINUED.)

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FROM a man without a philosophy no one can expect philosophical completeness. Therefore I may confess, without shame, that in trying to get a distinct notion of our aristocratic, our middle, and our working-class, with a view of testing the claims of each of these classes to become a centre of authority, I failed to complete the old-fashioned analysis which I was attempting, and did not show in these classes, as well as the virtuous mean and the excess, the defect also. I do not know that the omission very much matters; still as clearness is the one merit which a plain, unsystematic writer, without a philosophy, can hope to have, and as our notion of the three great English classes may perhaps be made clearer if we see their distinctive qualities in the defect, as well as in the excess and in the mean, let us try, before proceeding further, to remedy this omission. It is manifest, if the perfect and virtuous mean of that fine spirit which is the distinctive quality of aristocracies, is to be found in Lord Elcho's chivalrous style, and its excess in Sir Thomas Bateson's turn for resistance, that its defect must lie in a spirit not bold and high enough, and in an excessive and pusillanimous unaptness for resistance. If, again, the perfect and virtuous mean of that force by which our middle-class has done its great works, and of that self-reliance with which it contemplates itself and them, is to be seen in the performances and speeches of Mr. Bazley, and the excess of that force and that self-reliance in the performances and speeches of the Rev. W. Cassel, then it is manifest that their defect must lie in a helpless inaptitude for the great works of the middle-class, and in a poor and despicable lack of its self-satisfaction. To be chosen to exemplify the happy mean of a good quality, or set of good qualities, is evidently a praise to a man; nay, to be chosen to exemplify even their excess, is a kind of praise. Therefore I could have no hesitation in taking Lord Elcho and Mr. Bazley, the Rev. W. Cassel and Sir Thomas Bateson, to exemplify, respectively, the mean and the excess of aristocratic and middle-class qualities. But perhaps there might be a want of urbanity in singling out this or that personage as the representative of defect. Therefore I shall leave the defect of aristocracy unillustrated by any representative man. But with oneself one may always, without impropriety, deal quite freely; and, indeed, this sort of plain-dealing with oneself has in it, as all the moralists tell us, something very wholesome. So I will venture to humbly offer myself as an illustration of defect in those forces and qualities which make our middle-class what it is. The

too well-founded reproaches of my opponents declare how little I have lent a hand to the great works of the middle-class; for it is evidently these works, and my slackness at them, which are meant, when I am said to "refuse to lend a hand to the humble operation of uprooting certain definite evils" (such as church-rates and others), and that therefore "the believers in action grow impatient" with me. The line, again, of a still unsatisfied seeker which I have followed, the idea of self-transformation, of growing towards some measure of sweetness and light not yet reached, is evidently at clean variance with the perfect self-satisfaction current in my class, the middle-class, and may serve to indicate in me, therefore, the utter defect of this feeling. But these confessions, though salutary, are bitter and unpleasant.

To pass, then, to the working-class. The defect of this class would be the falling short in what Mr. Frederic Harrison calls those "bright powers of sympathy and ready powers of action," of which we saw in Mr. Odger the virtuous mean, and in Mr. Bradlaugh the excess. The working-class is so fast growing and rising at the present time, that instances of this defect cannot well be now very common. Perhaps Canning's *Needy Knife-grinder* (who is dead, and therefore cannot be pained at my taking him for an illustration) may serve to give us the notion of defect in the essential quality of a working-class; or I might even cite (since, though he is alive in the flesh, he is dead to all heed of criticism) my poor old poaching friend, Zephariah Diggs, who, between his hare-snaring and his gin-drinking, has got his powers of sympathy quite dulled, and his powers of action in any great movement of his class hopelessly impaired. But examples of this defect belong, as I have said, to a bygone age rather than to the present.

The same desire for clearness, which has led me thus to extend a little my first analysis of the three great classes of English society, prompts me also to make my nomenclature for them a little fuller, with a view to making it thereby more clear and manageable. It is awkward and tiresome to be always saying the aristocratic class, the middle-class, the working-class. For the middle-class, for that great body which, as we know, "has done all the great things that have been done in all departments," and which is to be conceived as chiefly moving between its two cardinal points of Mr. Bazley and the Rev. W. Cassel, but inclining, in the mass, rather towards the latter than the former—for this class we have a designation which now has become pretty well known, and which we may as well still keep for them, the designation of Philistines. What this term means I have so often explained that I need not repeat it here. For the aristocratic class, conceived mainly as a body moving between the two cardinal points of Lord Elcho and Sir Thomas Bateson, but as a whole nearer to the latter than the former, we have as yet got no special designation. Almost all my attention has naturally been concentrated on my own class, the middle-class, with which I am in closest sympathy, and which has been, besides, the great power of our day, and has had its

praises sung by all speakers and newspapers. Still the aristocratic class is so important in itself, and the weighty functions which Mr. Carlyle proposes at the present critical time to commit to it must add so much to its importance, that it seems neglectful, and a strong instance of that want of coherent philosophic method for which Mr. Frederic Harrison blames me, to leave the aristocratic class so much without notice and denomination. It may be thought that the characteristic which I have occasionally mentioned as proper to aristocracies—their natural inaccessibility, as children of the established fact, to ideas—points to our extending to this class also the designation of Philistines; the Philistine being, as is well known, the enemy of the children of light, or servants of the idea. Nevertheless, there seems to be an inconvenience in thus giving one and the same designation to two very different classes; and besides, if we look into the thing closely, we shall find that the term Philistine conveys a sense which makes it more peculiarly appropriate to our middle class than to our aristocratic. For *Philistine* gives the notion of something particularly stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to light and its children, and therein it specially suits our middle-class, who not only do not pursue sweetness and light, but who prefer to them that sort of machinery of business, chapels, tea-meetings, and addresses from Mr. Murphy and the Rev. W. Cassel, which makes up the dismal and illiberal life on which I have so often touched. But the aristocratic class has actually, as we have seen, in its well-known politeness, a kind of image or shadow of sweetness; and as for light, if it does not pursue light, it is not that it perversely cherishes some dismal and illiberal existence in preference to light, but it is seduced from following light by those mighty and eternal seducers of our race which weave for this class their most irresistible charms—by worldly splendour, security, power and pleasure. These seducers are exterior goods, but they are goods; and he who is hindered by them from caring for light and ideas, is not so much doing what is perverse as what is natural.

Keeping this in view, I have in my own mind often indulged myself with the fancy of putting side by side with the idea of our aristocratic class, the idea of the *Barbarians*. The Barbarians, to whom we all owe so much, and who reinvigorated and renewed our worn-out Europe, had, as is well known, eminent merits; and in this country, where we are for the most part sprung from the Barbarians, we have never had the prejudice against them which prevails among the races of Latin origin. The Barbarians brought with them that staunch individualism, as the modern phrase is, and that passion for doing as one likes, for the assertion of personal liberty, which appears to Mr. Bright the central idea of English life, and of which we have, at any rate, a very rich supply. The stronghold and natural seat of this passion was in the nobles of whom our aristocratic class are the inheritors; and this class, accordingly, have signally manifested it, and have done much by their example to recommend it to the body of the nation, who already, indeed, had it in their blood. The Barbarians, again,

had the passion for field-sports ; and they have handed it on to our aristocratic class, who of this passion too, as of the passion for asserting one's personal liberty, are the great natural stronghold. The care of the Barbarians for the body, and for all manly exercises ; the vigour, good looks, and bright complexion which they acquired and perpetuated in their families by these means—all this may be observed still in our aristocratic class. The chivalry of the Barbarians, with its characteristics of high spirit, fine manners, and distinguished bearing—what is this but the beautiful commencement of the politeness of our aristocratic class ? In some Barbarian noble one would have admired, if one could have been then alive to see it, the rudiments of Lord Elcho. Only, all this culture (to call it by that name) of the Barbarians was an exterior culture mainly : it consisted principally in outward gifts and graces, in looks, manners, accomplishments, prowess ; the chief inward gifts which had part in it were the most exterior, so to speak, of inward gifts, those which come nearest to outward ones : they were courage, a high spirit, self-reliance. Far within, and unawakened, lay a whole range of powers of thought and feeling, to which these interesting productions of nature had, from the circumstances of their life, no access. Making allowances for the difference of the times, surely we can observe precisely the same thing in our aristocratic class. In general its culture is exterior chiefly ; all the exterior graces and accomplishments, and the more external of the inward virtues, seem to be principally its portion. It now, of course, cannot but be often in contact with those studies by which, from the world of thought and feeling, true culture teaches us to fetch sweetness and light ; but its hold upon these very studies appears remarkably external, and unable to exert any deep power upon its spirit. Therefore the one insufficiency which we noted in the perfect mean of this class, Lord Elcho, was an insufficiency of light. And owing to the same causes, does not a subtle criticism lead us to make, even on the good looks and politeness of our aristocratic class, the one qualifying remark, that in these charming gifts there should perhaps be, for ideal perfection, a shade more *soul* ?

I often, therefore, when I want to distinguish clearly the aristocratic class from the Philistines proper, or middle-class, name the former, in my own mind, *the Barbarians* ; and when I go through the country, and see this and that beautiful and imposing seat of theirs crowning the landscape, "There," I say to myself, "is a great fortified post of the Barbarians."

It is obvious that that part of the working-class which, working diligently by the light of Mrs. Gooch's Golden Rule, looks forward to the happy day when it will sit on thrones with Mr. Bazley and other middle-class potentates, to survey, as Mr. Bright beautifully says, "the cities it has built, the railroads it has made, the manufactures it has produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen,"—it is obvious, I say, that this part of the working-class is, or is in a fair way to be, one in spirit with the industrial middle-

class. It is notorious that our middle-class Liberals have long looked forward to this consummation, when the working-class shall join forces with them, aid them heartily to carry forward their great works, go in a body to their tea-meetings, and, in short, enable them to bring about their millennium. That part of the working-class, therefore, which does really seem to lend itself to these great aims, may, with propriety, be numbered by us among the Philistines. That part of it, again, which so much occupies the attention of philanthropists at present—the part which gives all its energies to organizing itself, through trades' unions and other means, so as to constitute, first, a great working-class power, independent of the middle and aristocratic classes, and then, by dint of numbers, give the law to them, and itself reign absolutely,—this lively and interesting part must also, according to our definition, go with the Philistines; because it is its class and its class-instinct which it seeks to affirm, its ordinary self not its best self; and it is a machinery, an industrial machinery, and power and pre-eminence and other external goods which fill its thoughts, and not an inward perfection. It is wholly occupied, according to Plato's subtle expression, with the things of itself and not its real self, with the things of the State and not the real State. That vast portion, lastly, of the working-class which, raw and half-developed, has long lain half-hidden amidst its poverty and squalor, and is now issuing from its hiding-place to assert an Englishman's heaven-born privilege of doing as he likes, and is beginning to perplex us by marching where it likes, meeting where it likes, bawling what it likes, breaking what it likes, —to this vast residuum we may with great propriety give the name of *Populace*.

Thus we have got three distinct terms, *Barbarians*, *Philistines*, *Populace*, to denote roughly the three great classes into which our society is divided; and though this humble attempt at a scientific nomenclature falls, no doubt, very far short in precision of what might be required from a writer equipped with a complete and coherent philosophy, yet, from a notoriously unsystematic and unpretending writer, it will, I trust, be accepted as sufficient.

But, in using this new, and, I hope, convenient division of English society, two things are to be borne in mind. The first is, that since, under all our class divisions, there is a common basis of human nature, therefore, in every one of us, whether we be properly Barbarians, Philistines, or *Populace*, there exists, sometimes only in germ and potentially, sometimes more or less developed, the same tendencies and passions which have made our fellow-citizens of other classes what they are. This consideration is very important, because it has great influence in begetting that spirit of indulgence which is a necessary part of sweetness, and which, indeed, when our culture is complete, is, as I have said, inexhaustible. Thus, an English Barbarian who examines himself, will, in general, find himself to be not so entirely Barbarian but that he has in him, also, something of the Philistines, and even something of the

Populace as well. And the same with Englishmen of the two other classes. This is an experience which we may all verify every day. For instance, I myself (I again take myself as a sort of *corpus vile* to serve for illustration in a matter where serving for illustration may not by every one be thought agreeable), I myself am properly a Philistine—Mr. Swinburne would add, the son of a Philistine—and though, through circumstances which will, perhaps, one day be known, if ever the affecting history of my conversion comes to be written, I have, for the most part, broken with the ideas and the tea-meetings of my own class; yet I have not, on that account, been brought any nearer to the ideas and works of the Barbarians or of the Populace. Nevertheless, I never take a gun or a fishing-rod in my hands without feeling that I have in the ground of my nature the self-same seeds which, fostered by circumstances, do so much to make the Barbarian; and that, with the Barbarian's advantages, I might have rivalled him. Place me in one of his great fortified posts, with these seeds of a love for field-sports sown in my nature, with all the means of developing them, with all pleasures at my command, with most whom I met deferring to me, every one I met smiling on me, and with every appearance of permanence and security before me and behind me—then I, too, might have grown, I feel, into a very passable child of the established fact, of commendable spirit and politeness, and, at the same time, a little inaccessible to ideas and light; not, of course, with either the eminent fine spirit of Lord Elcho, or the eminent power of resistance of Sir Thomas Bateson, but, according to the measure of the common run of mankind, something between the two. And as to the Populace, who, whether he be Barbarian or Philistine, can look at them without sympathy, when he remembers how often—every time that we snatch up a vehement opinion in ignorance and passion, every time that we long to crush an adversary by sheer violence, every time that we are envious, every time that we are brutal, every time that we adore mere power or success, every time that we add our voice to swell a blind clamour against some unpopular personage, every time that we trample savagely on the fallen—he has found in his own bosom the eternal spirit of the Populace, and that there needs only a little help from circumstances to make it triumph in him untameably?

The second thing to be borne in mind I have indicated several times already. It is this. All of us, so far as we are Barbarians, Philistines, or Populace, imagine happiness to consist in doing what one's ordinary self likes. What one's ordinary self likes differs according to the class to which one belongs, and has its severer and its lighter side; always, however, remaining machinery, and nothing more. The graver self of the Barbarian likes honours and consideration; his more relaxed self, field-sports and pleasure. The graver self of one kind of Philistine likes business and money-making; his more relaxed self, comfort and tea-meetings. Of another kind of Philistine, the graver self likes trades' unions; the relaxed self, deputations, or hearing Mr. Odger speak. The sterner self of the Populace likes bawl-

ing, hustling, and smashing; the lighter self, beer. But in each class there are born a certain number of natures with a curiosity about their best self, with a bent for seeing things as they are, for disentangling themselves from machinery, for simply concerning themselves with reason and the will of God, and doing their best to make them prevail; for the pursuit, in a word, of perfection. To certain manifestations of this love for perfection mankind have accustomed themselves to give the name of genius; implying, by this name, something original and heaven-bestowed in the passion. But the passion is to be found far beyond those manifestations of it to which the world usually gives the name of genius, and in which there is, for the most part, a *talent* of some kind or other, a special and striking faculty of execution, informed by the heaven-bestowed ardour, or genius. It is to be found in many manifestations besides these, and may best be called, as we have called it, the love and pursuit of perfection, culture being the true nurse of the pursuing love, and sweetness and light the true character of the pursued perfection. Natures with this bent emerge in all classes—among the Barbarians, among the Philistines, among the Populace. And this bent always tends, as I have said, to take them out of their class, and to make their distinguishing characteristic not their Barbarianism or their Philistinism, but their *humanity*. They have, in general, a bad time of it in their lives; but they are sown more abundantly than one might think—they appear where and when one least expects it, they set up a fire which enflames, so to speak, the class with which they are ranked; and, in general, by the extrication of their best self as the self to develop, and by the simplicity of the ends fixed by them as paramount, they hinder the unchecked predominance of that class-life which is the affirmation of our ordinary self, and seasonably disconcert mankind in their worship of machinery.

Therefore, when we speak of ourselves as divided into Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace, we must be understood always to imply that within each of these classes there are a certain number of *aliens*, if we may so call them—persons who are mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general *humane* spirit, by the love of human perfection; and that this number is capable of being diminished or augmented. I mean, the number of those who will succeed in developing this happy instinct will be greater or smaller, in proportion both to the force of the original instinct within them, and to the hindrance or encouragement which it meets with from without. In almost all who have it, it is mixed with some infusion of the spirit of an ordinary self, some quantity of class-instinct, and even, as has been shown, of more than one class-instinct at the same time; so that, in general, the extrication of the best self, the predominance of the *humane* instinct, will very much depend upon its meeting, or not, with what is fitted to help and elicit it. At a moment, therefore, when it is agreed that we want a source of authority, and when it seems probable that the right source is our best self, it becomes of vast importance to see whether or not the things around us are, in general,

such as to help and elicit our best self, and if they are not, to see why they are not, and the most promising way of mending them.

Now, it is clear that the very absence of any powerful authority amongst us, and the prevalent doctrine of the duty and happiness of doing as one likes, and asserting our personal liberty, must tend to prevent the erection of any very strict standard of excellence, the belief in any very paramount authority of right reason, the recognition of our best self as anything very recondite and hard to come at. It may be, as I have said, a proof of our honesty that we do not attempt to give to our ordinary self, as we have it in action, predominant authority, and to impose its rule upon other people; but it is evident, also, that it is not easy, with our style of proceeding, to get beyond the notion of an ordinary self at all, or to get the paramount authority of a commanding best self, or right reason, recognized. The immortal Martinus Scriblerus well says:—"The taste of the bathos is implanted by nature itself in the soul of man; till, perverted by custom or example, he is taught, or rather compelled, to relish the sublime." But with us everything seems directed to prevent any such perversion of us by custom or example as might compel us to relish the sublime; by all means we are encouraged to keep our natural taste for the bathos unimpaired. I have formerly pointed out how in literature the absence of any authoritative centre, like an Academy, tends to do this; each section of the public has its own literary organ, and the mass of the public is without any suspicion that the value of these organs is relative to their being nearer a certain ideal centre of correct information, taste, and intelligence, or farther away from it. I have said that within certain limits—which any one who is likely to read this will have no difficulty in drawing for himself—my old adversary, the *Saturday Review*, may, on matters of literature and taste, be fairly enough regarded, relatively to a great number of newspapers which treat these matters, as a kind of organ of reason. But I remember once conversing with a company of Nonconformist admirers of some lecturer who had let off a great fire-work, which the *Saturday Review* said was all noise and false lights, and feeling my way as tenderly as I could about the effect of this unfavourable judgment upon those with whom I was conversing: "Oh," said one who was their spokesman, with the most tranquil air of conviction, "it is true the *Saturday Review* abuses the lecture, but the *British Banner*" (I am not quite sure it was the *British Banner*, but it was some newspaper of that stamp) "says that the *Saturday Review* is quite wrong." The speaker had evidently no notion that there was a scale of value for judgments on these topics, and that the judgments of the *Saturday Review* ranked high on this scale, and those of the *British Banner* low; the taste of the bathos implanted by nature in the literary judgments of man had never, in my friend's case, encountered any let or hindrance.

Just the same in religion as in literature. We have most of us little idea of a high standard to choose our guides by, of a great and profound spirit, which is an authority, while inferior spirits are none; it is enough

to give importance to things that this or that person says them decisively, and has a large following of some strong kind when he says them. This habit of ours is very well shown in that able and interesting work of Mr. Hepworth Dixon's, which we were all reading last year, *The Mormons, by One of Themselves*. Here, again, I am not quite sure that my memory serves me as to the exact title, but I mean the well-known book in which Mr. Hepworth Dixon described the Mormons, and other similar religious bodies in America, with so much detail and such warm sympathy. In this work it is enough for Mr. Dixon that this or that doctrine has its Rabbi who talks big to him, has a staunch body of disciples, and, above all, has plenty of rifles; that there are any further stricter tests to be applied to a doctrine before it is pronounced important never seems to occur to him. "It is easy to say," he writes of the Mormons, "that these saints are dupes and fanatics, to laugh at Joe Smith and his church, but what then? *The great facts remain*. Young and his people are at Utah; a church of 200,000 souls; an army of 20,000 rifles." But if the followers of a doctrine are really dupes, or worse, and its promulgators are really fanatics, or worse, it gives the doctrine no seriousness or authority the more that there should be found 200,000 souls—200,000 of the innumerable multitude with a natural taste for the bathos—to hold it, and 20,000 rifles to defend it. And again, of another religious organization in America: "A fair and open field is not to be refused when hosts so mighty throw down wager of battle on behalf of what they hold to be true, however strange their faith may seem." A fair and open field is not to be refused to any speaker; but this solemn way of heralding him is quite out of place unless he has, for the best reason and spirit of man, some significance. "Well, but," says Mr. Hepworth Dixon, "a theory which has been accepted by men like Judge Edmonds, Dr. Hare, Elder Frederick, and Professor Bush!" And again: "Such are, in brief, the bases of what Newman Weeks, Sarah Horton, Deborah Butler, and the associated brethren, proclaimed in Rolt's Hall as the new covenant!" If he was summing up an account of the teaching of Plato or St. Paul, Mr. Hepworth Dixon could not be more earnestly reverential. But the question is, have personages like Judge Edmonds, and Newman Weeks, and Elderess Polly, and Elderess Antoinette, and the rest of Mr. Hepworth Dixon's heroes and heroines, anything of the weight and significance for the best reason and spirit of man that Plato and St. Paul have? Evidently they, at present, have not; and a very small taste of them and their doctrines ought to have convinced Mr. Hepworth Dixon that they never could have. "But," says he, "the magnetic power which Shakerism is exercising on American thought would of itself compel us," and so on. Now as far as real thought is concerned—thought which affects the best reason and spirit of man, the scientific thought of the world, the only thought which deserves speaking of in this solemn way—America has up to the present time been hardly more than a province of England, and even now would not herself claim to be more than abreast of England; and of this only real human thought,

English thought itself is not just now, as we must all admit, one of the most significant factors. Neither, then, can American thought be; and the magnetic power which Shakerism exercises on American thought is about as important, for the best reason and spirit of man, as the magnetic power which the Rev. W. Cassel exercises on Birmingham Protestantism. And as we shall never get rid of our natural taste for the bathos in religion—never get access to a best self and right reason which may stand as a serious authority—by treating the Rev. W. Cassel as his own disciples treat him, seriously, and as if he was as much an authority as any one else, so we shall never get rid of it while our able and popular writers treat their Joe Smiths and Deborah Butlers, with their so many thousand souls and so many thousand rifles, in the like exaggerated and misleading manner, and so do their best to confirm us in a bad mental habit to which we are already too prone.

If our habits make it hard for us to come at the idea of a high best self, of a paramount authority, in literature or religion, how much more do they make this hard in the sphere with which we are at present specially concerning ourselves—the sphere of politics! In other countries, the governors, not depending so immediately on the favour of the governed, have everything to urge them, if they know anything of right reason (and it is at least supposed that governors should know more of this than the mass of the governed), to set it authoritatively before the community. But our whole scheme of government being representative, every one of our governors has all possible temptation, instead of setting up before the governed who elect him, and on whose favour he depends, a high standard of right reason, to accommodate himself as much as possible to their natural taste for the bathos; and even if he tries to go counter to it, to proceed in this with so much flattering and coaxing, that they shall not suspect their ignorance and prejudices to be anything very unlike right reason, or their natural taste for the bathos to differ much from a relish for the sublime. Every one is thus in every possible way encouraged to trust in his own heart; but “he that trusteth in his own heart,” says the Wise Man, “is a fool;” and at any rate this, which Bishop Wilson says, is undeniably true: “The number of those who need to be awakened is far greater than that of those who need comfort.” But in our political system everybody is comforted. Our guides and governors who have to be elected by the influence of the Barbarians, and who depend on their favour, sing the praises of the Barbarians, and say all the smooth things that can be said of them. With Mr. Tennyson, they celebrate “the great broad-shouldered genial Englishman,” with his “sense of duty,” his “reverence for the laws,” and his “patient force,” who saves us from the “revolts, republics, revolutions, most no graver than a schoolboy’s barring out,” which upset other and less broad-shouldered nations. Our guides who are chosen by the Philistines and who have to look to their favour, tell the Philistines how “all the world knows that the great middle-class of this country supplies the mind, the will, and the power requisite for all

the great and good things that have to be done," and congratulate them on their "earnest good sense, which penetrates through sophisms, ignores commonplaces, and gives to conventional illusions their true value." Our guides who look to the favour of the Populace, tell them that "theirs are the brightest powers of sympathy, and the readiest powers of action." Harsh things are said, too, no doubt, against all the great classes of the community; but these things so evidently come from a hostile class, and are so manifestly dictated by the passions and prepossessions of a hostile class, and not by right reason, that they make no serious impression on those at whom they are launched, but slide easily off their minds. For instance, when the Reform League orators inveigh against our cruel and tyrannical aristocracy, these invectives so evidently show the passions and point of view of the Populace, that they do not sink into the minds of those at whom they are addressed, or awaken any thought or self-examination in them. Again, when Sir Thomas Bateson describes the Philistines and the Populace as influenced with a kind of hideous passion for emasculating the aristocracy, that reproach so clearly comes from the wrath and excited imagination of the Barbarians, that it does not much set the Philistines and the Populace thinking. Or when Mr. Lowe calls the Populace drunken and venal, he so evidently calls them this in an agony of apprehension for his Philistine or middle-class Parliament, which has done so many great and heroic works, and is now threatened with mixture and debasement, that the Populace do not lay his words seriously to heart. So the voice which makes a permanent impression on each of our classes is the voice of its friends, and this is from the nature of things, as I have said, a comforting voice. The Barbarians remain in the belief that the great broad-shouldered genial Englishman may be well satisfied with himself; the Philistines remain in the belief that the great middle-class of this country, with its earnest common-sense penetrating through sophisms and ignoring commonplaces, may be well satisfied with itself: the Populace, that the working-man with his bright powers of sympathy and ready powers of action, may be satisfied with himself. What hope, at this rate, of extinguishing the taste of the bathos implanted by nature itself in the soul of man, or of inculcating the belief that excellence dwells among high and steep rocks, and can only be reached by those who sweat blood to reach her?

But it will be said, perhaps, that candidates for political influence and leadership, who thus caress the self-love of those whose suffrages they desire, know quite well that they are not saying the sheer truth as reason sees it, but that they are using a sort of conventional language, or what we call clap-trap, which is essential to the working of representative institutions. And therefore, I suppose, we ought rather to say with Figaro: *Qui est-ce qu'on trompe ici?* Now I admit that often, but not always, when our governors say smooth things to the self-love of the class whose political support they want, they know very well that they are overstepping, by a long stride, the bounds of truth and soberness, and while they talk they in a manner, no doubt, put their tongue in their

cheek. Not always ; because, when a Barbarian appeals to his own class to make him their representative and give him political power, he, when he pleases their self-love by extolling broad-shouldered genial Englishmen with their sense of duty, reverence for the laws, and patient force, pleases his own self-love and extols himself, and is, therefore, himself ensnared by his own smooth words. And so, too, when a Philistine wants to represent his brother Philistines, and extols the earnest good sense which characterizes Manchester, and supplies the mind, the will, and the power, as the *Daily News* eloquently says, requisite for all the great and good things that have to be done, he intoxicates and deludes himself as well as his brother Philistines who hear him. But it is true that a Barbarian often wants the political support of the Philistines ; and he unquestionably, when he flatters the self-love of Philistinism, and extols, in the approved fashion, its energy, enterprise, and self-reliance, continually striking out new paths of industry and subduing the forces of nature, knows that he is talking clap-trap, and, so to say, puts his tongue in his cheek. On all matters where Nonconformity and its catchwords are concerned, this insincerity of Barbarians needing Nonconformist support, and, therefore, flattering the self-love of Nonconformity and repeating its catchwords without the least real belief in them, is very noticeable. When the Nonconformists, in a transport of blind zeal, threw out Sir James Graham's useful Education Clauses in 1843, one-half of their parliamentary representatives, no doubt, who cried aloud against "trampling on the religious liberty of the Dissenters by taking the money of Dissenters to teach the tenets of the Church of England," put their tongue in their cheek while they so cried out. And perhaps there is even a sort of motion of Mr. Frederic Harrison's tongue towards his cheek when he talks of the "shriek of superstition," and tells the working-class that theirs are the brightest powers of sympathy and the readiest powers of action. But the point on which I would insist is, that this involuntary tribute to truth and soberness on the part of certain of our governors and guides never reaches at all the mass of us governed, to serve as a lesson to us, to abate our self-love, and to awaken in us a suspicion that our favourite prejudices may be, to a higher reason, all nonsense. Whatever by-play goes on among the more intelligent of our leaders, we do not see it ; and we are left to believe that, not only in our own eyes, but in the eyes of our representative and ruling men, there is nothing more admirable than our ordinary self, whatever our ordinary self happens to be—Barbarian, Philistine, or Populace.

Thus everything in our political life tends to hide from us that there is anything wiser than our ordinary selves, and to prevent our getting the notion of a paramount right reason. Royalty itself, in its idea the expression of the collective nation, and a sort of constituted witness to its best mind, we try to turn into a kind of grand advertising van, to give publicity and credit to the inventions, sound or unsound, of the ordinary self of individuals. I remember, when I was in North Germany, having this very strongly brought to my mind in the matter of schools and their institution. In Prussia, the

best schools are Crown patronage schools, as they are called : schools which have been established and endowed (and new ones are to this day being established and endowed) by the Sovereign himself out of his own revenues, to be under the direct control and management of him or of those representing him, and to serve as types of what schools should be. The Sovereign, as his position raises him above many prejudices and little-nesses, and as he can always have at his disposal the best advice, has evident advantages over private founders in well planning and directing a school ; while at the same time his great means and his great influence secure, to a well-planned school of his, credit and authority. This is what, in North Germany, the governors do, in the matter of education, for the governed ; and one may say that they thus give the governed a lesson, and draw out in them the idea of a right reason higher than the suggestions of an ordinary man's ordinary self. But in England how different is the part which in this matter our governors are accustomed to play ! The Licensed Victuallers or the Commercial Travellers propose to make a school for their children ; and I suppose, in the matter of schools, one may call the Licensed Victuallers or the Commercial Travellers ordinary men, with the natural taste for the bathos unlearned ; and a Sovereign with the advice of men like Wilhelm von Humboldt or Schleiermacher may, in this matter, be a better judge, and nearer to right reason. And it will be allowed, probably, that right reason would suggest that, to have a sheer school of licensed victuallers' children, or a sheer school of commercial travellers' children, and to bring them all up, not only at home but at school too, in a kind of odour of licensed victualism or of bagmanism, is not a wise training to give to these children. And in Germany, I have said, the action of the national guides or governors is to suggest and provide a better. But in England the action of the national guides or governors is for a royal prince or a great minister to go down to the opening of the licensed victuallers' or of the commercial travellers' school, to take the chair, to extol the energy and self-reliance of the licensed victuallers or the commercial travellers, to be all of their way of thinking, to predict full success to their schools, and never so much as to hint to them that they are doing a very foolish thing, and that the right way to go to work with their children's education is quite different. And it is the same in almost every department of affairs. While, on the Continent, the idea prevails that it is the business of the heads and representatives of the nation, by virtue of their superior means, power, and information, to set an example and to provide suggestions of right reason, among us the idea is that the business of the heads and representatives of the nation is nothing of the kind, but to applaud the natural taste for the bathos showing itself vigorously in any part of the community, and to encourage its works.

Now I do not say that the political system of foreign countries has not inconveniences which may outweigh the inconveniences of our own political system ; nor am I the least proposing to get rid of our own political system and to adopt theirs. But a sound centre of authority being what, in this

disquisition, we have been led to seek, and right reason, or our best self, appearing alone to offer such a sound centre of authority, it is necessary to take note of the chief impediments which hinder, in this country, the extrication or recognition of this right reason as a paramount authority, with a view to afterwards trying in what way they can best be removed.

This being borne in mind, I proceed to remark how not only do we get no suggestions of right reason, and no rebukes of our ordinary self, from our governors, but a kind of philosophical theory is widely spread among us to the effect that there is no such thing at all as a best self and a right reason having claim to paramount authority, or, at any rate, no such thing ascertainable and capable of being made use of; and that there is nothing but an infinite number of ideas and works of our ordinary selves, and suggestions of our natural taste for the bathos, pretty equal in value, which are doomed either to an irreconcilable conflict, or else to a perpetual give and take; and that wisdom consists in choosing the give and take rather than the conflict, and in sticking to our choice with patience and good humour. And, on the other hand, we have another philosophical theory rife among us, to the effect that without the labour of perverting ourselves by custom or example to relish right reason, but by continuing all of us to follow freely our natural taste for the bathos, we shall, by the mercy of Providence, and by a kind of natural tendency of things, come in time to relish and follow right reason. The great promoters of these philosophical theories are our newspapers, which, no less than our parliamentary representatives, may be said to act the part of guides and governors to us; and these favourite doctrines of theirs I call—or should call if the doctrines were not preached by authorities I so much respect—the first, a peculiarly British form of atheism, the second, a peculiarly British form of quietism. The first-named melancholy doctrine is preached in *The Times* with great clearness and beauty of style; indeed, it is well known, from the example of the poet Lucretius and others, what great masters of style this sad doctrine has always counted among its promulgators. “It is of no use,” says *The Times*, “for us to attempt to force upon our neighbours our several likings and dislikings. We must take things as they are. Everybody has his own little vision of religious or civil perfection. Under the evident impossibility of satisfying everybody, we agree to take our stand on equal laws and on a system as open and liberal as is possible. The result is that everybody has more liberty of action and of speaking here than anywhere else in the Old World.” We come again here upon Mr. Roebuck’s celebrated definition of happiness, on which I have so often commented: “I look around me and ask what is the state of England? Is not every man able to say what he likes? I ask you whether the world over, or in past history, there is anything like it? Nothing. I pray that our unrivalled happiness may last.” This is the old story of our system of checks and every Englishman doing as he likes, which we have already seen to have been convenient enough so long as there were only the Barbarians and the Philistines to do what they liked, but to be

getting inconvenient now that the Populace wants to do what it likes too. But for all that, I will not at once dismiss this famous doctrine, but will first quote another passage from *The Times*, applying the doctrine to a matter of which we have just been speaking—education. “The difficulty here,” says *The Times*, “does not reside in any removable arrangements. It is inherent and native in the actual and inveterate state of things in this country. All these powers and personages, all these conflicting influences and varieties of character, exist, and have long existed among us; they are fighting it out, and will long continue to fight it out, without coming to that happy consummation when some one element of the British character is to destroy or to absorb all the rest.” There it is; the various promptings of the natural taste for the bathos in this man and that amongst us are fighting it out; and the day will never come (and, indeed, why should we wish it to come?) when one man’s particular sort of taste for the bathos shall tyrannize over another man’s; nor when right reason (if that may be called an element of the British character) shall absorb and rule them all. “The whole system of this country, like the constitution we boast to inherit, and are glad to uphold, is made up of established facts, prescriptive authorities, existing usages, powers that be, persons in possession, and communities or classes that have won dominion for themselves, and will hold it against all comers.” Every force in the world, evidently, except the one reconciling force, right reason! Sir Thomas Bateson here, the Rev. W. Cassel on this side, Mr. Bradlaugh on that! pull devil, pull baker! presented with the mastery of style of our leading journal, the sad picture, as one gazes upon it, assumes the iron and inexorable solemnity of tragic destiny.

After this, the milder doctrine of our other philosophical teacher, the *Daily News*, has, at first, something very attractive and assuaging. The *Daily News* begins, indeed, in appearance, to weave the iron web of necessity round us like *The Times*. “The alternative is between a man’s doing what he likes and his doing what some one else, probably not one whit wiser than himself, likes.” This points to the tacit compact, mentioned in my last paper, between the Barbarians and the Philistines, and into which it is hoped that the Populace will one day enter; the compact, so creditable to English honesty, that no class, if it exercise power, having only the ideas and aims of its ordinary self to give effect to, shall treat its ordinary self too seriously, or attempt to impose it on others; but shall let these others—the Rev. W. Cassel, for instance, in his Papist-baiting, and Mr. Bradlaugh in his Hyde Park anarchy-mongering, have their fling. But then the *Daily News* suddenly lights up the gloom of necessitarianism with bright beams of hope. “No doubt,” it says, “the common reason of society ought to check the aberrations of individual eccentricity.” This common reason of society looks very like our best self or right reason, to which we want to give authority, by making the action of the *State*, or nation in its collective character, the expression of it. But of this project of ours, the *Daily News*, with its

subtle dialectics, makes havoc. "Make the State the organ of the common reason?" it says. "You may make it the organ of something or other, but how can you be certain that reason will be the quality which will be embodied in it?" You cannot be certain of it, undoubtedly, if you never try to bring the thing about; but the question is, the action of the State being the action of the collective nation, and the action of the collective nation carrying naturally great publicity, weight, and force of example with it, whether we should not try to put into the action of the State as much as possible of right reason, or our best self, which may, in this manner, come back to us with new force and authority, may have visibility, form, and influence, and help to confirm us, in the many moments when we are inclined to be our ordinary selves merely, in resisting our natural taste of the bathos rather than in giving way to it?

But no! says our teacher: "it is better there should be an infinite variety of experiments in human action, because, as the explorers multiply, the true track is more likely to be discovered. The common reason of society can check the aberrations of individual eccentricity only by acting on the individual reason; and it will do so in the main sufficiently, if left to this natural operation." This is what I call the specially British form of quietism, or a devout, but excessive, reliance on an over-ruling Providence. Providence, as the moralists are careful to tell us, generally works in human affairs by human means; so when we want to make right reason act on individual reason, our best self on our ordinary self, we seek to give it more power of doing so by giving it public recognition and authority, and embodying it, so far as we can, in the State. It seems too much to ask of Providence, that while we, on our part, leave our congenital taste for the bathos to its natural operation and its infinite variety of experiments, Providence should mysteriously guide it into the true track, and compel it to relish the sublime. At any rate, great men and great institutions have hitherto seemed necessary for producing any considerable effect of this kind. No doubt we have an infinite variety of experiments, and an ever-multiplying multitude of explorers; even in this short paper I have enumerated many: the *British Banner*, Judge Edmonds, Newman Weeks, Deborah Butler, Elderess Polly, Brother Noyes, the Rev. W. Cassel, the Licensed Victuallers, the Commercial Travellers, and I know not how many more; and the numbers of this noble army are swelling every day. But what a depth of quietism, or rather, what an over-bold call on the direct interposition of Providence, to believe that these interesting explorers will discover the true track, or at any rate, "will do so in the main sufficiently" (whatever that may mean) if left to their natural operation; that is, by going on as they are! Philosophers say, indeed, that we learn virtue by performing acts of virtue; but to say that we shall learn virtue by performing any acts to which our natural taste for the bathos carries us, that the Rev. W. Cassel comes at his best self by Papist-baiting, or Newman Weeks and Deborah Butler at right reason by following their noses, this certainly does appear over-sanguine.

It is true what we want is to make right reason act on individual reason, the reason of individuals ; all our search for authority has that for its end and aim. The *Daily News* says, I observe, that all my argument for authority "has a non-intellectual root;" and from what I know of my own mind and its inertness, I think this so probable, that I should be inclined easily to admit it, if it were not that, in the first place, nothing of this kind, perhaps, should be admitted without examination ; and in the second, a way of accounting for this charge being made in this particular instance without full grounds, appears to present itself. What seems to me to account here, perhaps, for the charge, is the want of flexibility of our race, on which I have so often remarked. I mean, it being admitted that the conformity of the individual reason of the Rev. W. Cassel or Mr. Bradlaugh with right reason is our true object, and not the mere restraining them, by the strong arm of the State, from Papist-baiting or railing-breaking—admitting this, we have so little flexibility that we cannot readily perceive that the State's restraining them from these indulgences may yet fix clearly in their minds that, to the collective nation, these indulgences appear irrational and unallowable, may make them pause and reflect, and may contribute to bringing, with time, their individual reason into harmony with right reason. But in no country, owing to the want of intellectual flexibility above mentioned, is the leaning which is our natural one, and, therefore, needs no recommending to us, so sedulously recommended, and the leaning which is not our natural one, and, therefore, does not need dispraising to us, so sedulously dispraised, as in ours. To rely on the individual being, with us, the natural leaning, we will hear of nothing but the good of relying on the individual ; to act through the collective nation on the individual being not our natural leaning, we will hear nothing in recommendation of it. But the wise know that we often need to hear most of that to which we are least inclined, and even to learn to employ, in certain circumstances, that which is capable, if employed amiss, of being a danger to us.

Elsewhere this is far better understood than here. In the last number of the *Westminster Review*, an able writer, but with precisely our national want of flexibility of which I have been speaking, has unearthed, I see, for our present needs, an English translation, published some years ago, of Wilhelm von Humboldt's book, *The Sphere and Duties of Government*. Humboldt's object in this book is to show that the operation of Government ought to be severely limited to what directly and immediately relates to the security of person and property. Wilhelm von Humboldt, one of the most beautiful and perfect souls that have ever existed, used to say that one's business in life was, first, to perfect oneself by all the means in one's power, and, secondly, to try and create in the world around one an aristocracy, the most numerous that one possibly could, of talents and characters. He saw, of course, that, in the end, everything comes to this, that the individual must act for himself, and must be perfect in himself ; and he lived in a

country, Germany, where people were disposed to act too little for themselves, and to rely too much on the Government. But even thus, such was his flexibility, so little was he in bondage to a mere abstract maxim, that he saw very well that for his purpose itself of enabling the individual to stand perfect on his own foundations, and to do without the State, the action of the State would for long, long years be necessary; and soon after he wrote his book on *The Sphere and Duties of Government*, Wilhelm von Humboldt became Minister of Education in Prussia, and from his ministry all the great reforms which give the control of Prussian education to the State—the transference of the management of public schools from their old boards of trustees to the State, the obligatory State-examination for schools, the obligatory State-examination for schoolmasters, and the foundation of the great State University of Berlin—take their origin. This his English reviewer says not a word of; perhaps he did not know it, it is possible he would not have understood it if he had known it. But writing for a people whose dangers lie, as we have seen, on the side of their unchecked and unguided individual action, whose dangers none of them lie on the side of an over-reliance on the State, he quotes just so much of Wilhelm von Humboldt's example as can flatter them in their propensities, and do them no good; and just what might make them think, and be of use to them, he leaves on one side. This precisely recalls the manner, it will be observed, in which we have seen that our royal and noble personages proceed with the Licensed Victuallers.

In France the action of the State on individuals is yet more preponderant than in Germany; and the need which friends of human perfection feel to enable the individual to stand perfect on his own foundations is all the stronger. But what says one of the keenest of these friends, Monsieur Renan, on State action, and even State action in that very sphere where in France it is most excessive, the sphere of education? Here are his words:—"A liberal believes in liberty, and liberty signifies the non-intervention of the State. *But such an ideal is still a long way off from us, and the very means to remove it to an indefinite distance would be precisely the State's withdrawing its action too soon.*" And this, he adds, is even truer of education than of any other department of public affairs.

We see, then, how indispensable to that human perfection which we seek is, in the opinion of good judges, some such public recognition and establishment of our best self, or right reason, as culture leads us to try and embody in the State. We see, too, the many inconveniences which come from its non-recognition, and the almost fanatical zeal which opposes itself to its recognition. These inconveniences and that zeal the lover of perfection must make himself thoroughly acquainted with, in order to see how they may be most fitly dealt with; and as we have not yet exhausted the rich varieties of their development, or the lessons they have to teach us, we must return to the subject once more before concluding.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

